

On the March :

A

LAN,

EDINER HANLEY,

MADRAS: STAFFS CO. & S.

~~~~~  
In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold  
thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper,  
whether this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good."  
~~~~~

MADRAS:

PRINTED AT THE ASYLUM PRESS, MOUNT ROAD,
BY WILLIAM THOMAS.

1867.

MY PARENTS

WITH EVERY EXPRESSION OF
LOVE AND GRATITUDE,

THIS BOOK,

MY FIRST PROSE WORK,

IS AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED.

GARDINER HARVEY.

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“ On the March.”

CHAPTER I.

RAJOOLOOPETTAH.

THE little village of Rajooloopettah is situated just within the boundaries of the Deccan, or tract of Indian country under the sway of His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad. I don't say you will find the name, reader, in any map or road-book. It may be that the village is too small and unimportant to find its way into either ; or it may be that the name is spelt in a different manner than that shown here, or it may have (as is often the case) fifty different appellations. But Rajooloopettah let it be named here.

It was like the thousands of its provincial neighbours, squalid, dusty, sun-dried, and very dirty. The houses, or hovels rather, were built very low, of red clay, and roofed with palmyra leaves or grass ; and had doors so small and low, as to require considerable stooping on the part of grown-up persons before ingress or egress could be effected.

There were some houses however, roofed with coarse tiles, and in rather better condition than the generality. These belonged to the aristocracy of Rajooloopettah; paunchy Bhramins; and sturdy well-fed Mahomedans. The walls were either carelessly daubed with white-wash, or streaked perpendicularly with stripes of red, and white, or ochre. They had *pyalls* or little mud benches outside the doors, and little red painted niches on each side the carved door posts, in which to place lamps on festive occasions; while the thresh-hold after being carefully plastered, was marked with various highly elaborate designs in white chalk or dust. These houses were generally enclosed in a little court-yard in which the wives of the Mussölmaun reposed in *goshah*, or the bare-headed ash-streaked Bhramin lolled in luxurious idleness.

But the houses of the *oi polloi* were styies compared to these; white-wash was nowhere to be seen; the gaudy stripes of red and white, considered beautiful in the eyes of the inhabitants were too expensive to indulge in; the doors were merely holes in the walls; windows were entirely dispensed with; and as for a chimney, it was not dreamt of—smoke, dirt, ashes, pariah dogs, and nude podgy little children, coming forth into the sun by the only one means of exit, and mingling with the varied stream of out-door nuisances.

There was one short street, or rather lane in this village, more particularly devoted to merchandise and the hoarding of cowries, dubs, and rupees of the realm, than any of the others. This was the bazaar, if possible, dirtier and more nauseously odoriferous than what may be termed the West End.

There seemed, on the particular day in which our story opens, to be a slight panic among the *dookandars* or shopkeepers in this bazaar. Rajooloopettah couldn't often boast of a panic in the market. Enterprise was at rather a low ebb here. A few of the commonest country products borne on the backs of half-starved bullocks were its only imports, while its exports were anything but thriving. People who came and went along the badly-made road skirting the village, dropped in occasionally for a seer of rice or dholl, and sometimes even for a fowl; and then went their way again only a few dubs the poorer, while others after haggling for some time about the price of betel, nut and tobacco, would depart without spending a cowrie.

On this particular day however, the sudden appearance of a few dusty, tired-looking "Company Bahadoor's Sepoys" had created quite a stir along the whole line of shop stalls. It was whispered that a Regiment was on the march, and would halt at Rajooloopettah the next day. What!

a thousand Sepoys with their camp followers and contingencies, to be supplied with food— it was a perfect wind-fall to the village. The fat old grain-seller rubbed his hands grimly, and smiled with anticipations as he began thinking of the highest price at which he could now afford to part with his rice of sorts ; his *coolty* and *chenna*, his *dhol*, dry ginger, and ground-nuts. The unctuous oil-man cast a look towards a little *godown*, or warehouse of a few feet square, and began to consider whether the supply would be equal to to-morrow's demand. The retail draper, grocer, and tobacco-nist were already making an inspection, and assortment of their goods, and trying to impress upon the sceptical Sepoys how the price of every thing had risen in consequence of the scarcity of water last season, while bags of betel nut, and piles of *pan* leaves were brought to the front from some dark hidden recess.

The Putail and Kurnum, or headmen of the village, very important in their own eyes, and looked upon as despots by the inhabitants, were strolling pompously down the line of shops, pretending to be fixing a *neruk* or tariff on the sale of each article. These two were a kind of Mayor and High Sheriff to the village of Rajooloopettah, and they maintained their position in it too with rather a high hand. They were respectively of immense high caste, and looked up to by all around

as devout followers of their individual gods, of which mammon was no doubt one. They were not at all scrupulous in taking bribes ; hiding, and assisting in the escape of offenders against the law, when it was their interest to do so ; and overlooking the fact of a rich *buniah* or grain-merchant " withholding corn from the poor," till starvation would drive them to offer high prices for it. They were now looking down on the Havildar and his party of Sepoys with the utmost indifference, passing along the bazaar, and laying down the prices of the different marketable drugs, so as to give an exorbitant profit to those who had already " greased their palms."

Some distance out of the village and standing by the roadside was a traveller's Bungalow ; a solid bomb-proof building, enclosed by a low wall, and looking " remote, unfriendly, melancholy, slow." Every weary European traveller, though exceedingly eager for a good night's rest rather avoided these Bungalows, which generally contained a large army of certain highly obnoxious insects, which never did, and never will conduce to the pleasure of human slumber. The scanty furniture so far from being rickety or in bad repair, seemed to have been made to defy the ravages of old age, and the ingenuity of the traveller's " boy" requiring firewood. They were the solidest of the solid. The chairs seemed to have been hewn out of huge

heavy logs of the hardest wood. Comfort was quite a secondary consideration to the designer of these chairs. His chief aim was no doubt to prevent these articles of furniture from being carried off in mistake by some light-fingered traveller. They were tall and straight in the back as a grenadier, and the seats were of the hardest description of wood to be procured in the Deccan, while further to impress upon the traveller that they were not his, they were branded on the backs with the letters N. B., meaning no doubt "Nizam's Bungalow." The whole building partook of the character of its furniture, and in order to prevent carriages, bandies, or horses being brought to the door there was a wall completely around it, only to be passed over on foot, up and down stone steps. Seated on these steps, and holding the reins of a grey horse from which he had just dismounted, was a young Officer in shell jacket and forage cap. He had just unbuckled and thrown aside his sword, which looked rather the worse for wear, though it was clean and highly polished; and now with his cap on the back of his head, and his jacket unbuttoned, he was energetically fanning himself with his handkerchief. The gold thread figure on his cap was rather tarnished, and would puzzle a looker-on as to the Regiment the young man belonged to. It was simply a dilapidated cypher, more however like the letter **C** reversed, than an **O**, and it would

seem evident that some other figure, or figures on either side of it, had become detached. The fact was, this young Officer had been through a Burmese Campaign ; and had had rather a narrow escape of being shot through the brain. The bullet had only torn away the other figure or figures, damaging the one left, and stunning the head inside for a short time. The wearer was quite proud of this cap, looking upon it as a kind of trophy, and as it was his only one, and the regulation gold thread letters not procurable everywhere, he was permitted to wear it so for the present.

He was the Quarter Master of the Regiment which was expected at Rajooloopettah next morning, and had come on as usual in advance from the last stage to mark out the camping ground. Both himself and steed looked rather tired, and in need of refreshment, but both were fain to wait patiently, the one till his bandies and tent came up, and the other for its *syce** and grass-cutter.

Half an hour's profuse fanning, panting, and grumbling on the part of the biped, and pawing of the ground, snuffing, and whinnying on that of the quadruped, and two Regimental Store Lascars approached the Bungalow followed by some bandies, slowly creaking along, and laden with tents, &c.

The Quarter Master flung the reins to the *syce*,

* Native groom.

who came panting up as if he had been running at his best pace for the last hour or so; and after shouting for the Quarter Master Serjeant, found that worthy fast asleep on a soft pile of tent canvass on one of the bandies.

Then the two, accompanied by their lascars bearing the Camp-colors, went over to a large level plain some distance beyond the Bungalow, and proceeded to mark the position the tents were to assume thereon.

The Serjeant was a brisk little Devonian, who clipped his Hs and *h*aspirated his vowels in a manner defiant of all rule, and difficult to be understood by the natives. He was well up to all the Returns, Orders, and Regulations, regarding his department, and was an energetic useful fellow altogether. He had a wife, some said ten, and others twenty and thirty years older than himself—a very huge, unweildy, but good humoured Irish-woman; but they had no children. She was coming on slowly behind in a bandy all to herself, which had broken down twice already to her great distress, and the amusement of the Officers, who had jokingly asked the Quarter Master if it would not have been better for him to have indented on the Commissariat Officer for an Elephant for Mrs. Mather's special accommodation.

Before commencing work, the Officer demanded a light for his cheroot, and graciously tendered his

case to the Serjeant, who took one too with a grave salute, and repeated the order for fire.

“ Now then, Shaik 'Omed ! don't ye 'ear ; *harg* low to the Sab directly ! ”

The *harg* (properly *ág*, or fire) was quickly procured by a flint and steel, and the process of marking out commenced ; the Serjeant dressing the long line of little red flags with various contortions of his body, and shouts to his subordinates.

“ Now then, Mooteehaller ! (Mooteealoo,) where *har* you goin' with that ere *bowta* ?* Dub jow (go back)—back still—more still—*har* ye deaf ? back still—there, that 'll do—buss ! ”

The marking out over, the few tents that had been brought up were pitched. The double-poled Mess Tent—for the Mess property Books howed two of these on its list—was erected at its own peculiar flag ; the Quarter Master's on his, and the Serjeant's, lascars', and Jamdari guards at their respective colors. Then a Choubdar with a formidable curved dagger thrust through the thick folds of his *cummerbund* came up, and making a double salaam folded his arms, and awaited orders.

There were none to give him, so he was dismissed ; and Mr. Viney (that was the young Officer's name) proceeded to enjoy a tub, or rather several chatties of water ; cool light *costuræ* ; and a quiet

* Camp Colour, or flag.

dinner, washed down with a quart of Tennent's good ale ; after which he took a short stroll, and then turned in, rather weary after his hot long evening ride.

CHAPTER II.

SOME OF THE CADRE.

BEFORE 8 o'clock had been struck on any ghurrie* that morning, the inhabitants of Rajooloopettah had turned out in force, to see the Company's Regiment come marching in, and to hear the attractive noise of the big drum. Mr. Viney met it just as the head of the column reached the traveller's Bungalow, and marshalled its way into camp. Then having drawn up in open column, each Company in front of its respective tents, the arms were piled ; placed under the charge of a sentry, and the hot tired Sepoys dispersed. While the men were unstrapping their heavy knapsacks, and laying aside their jackets and white-covered japanned hats, the Officers had sought the Mess Tent, and were refreshing themselves in various ways previous to seeking their own tents to bathe and dress for breakfast.

They were as fine-looking a set of young men as any Commander-in-Chief might wish to see as Officers, and, with the exception of one or two, were really up to any amount of fatigue duties. There was the young *griffin* fresh from the shores of old

* A brass gong for striking the hour on.

England with his blooming cheeks as yet untoasted by the sun. There was the full-grown ten-years'-service-wallah who was almost if not thoroughly acclimatized, and the grey-haired and white-moustached veteran of from twenty-five to thirty years' service, who rattled off Hindostanee splendidly, and seemed as though he were made for the country, and the country for him.

Among these last was the Colonel of the Regiment—Arthur Maurice—a fine tall soldierly-looking man, whose hair had turned to silver, but whose figure was as erect as when he first entered the service. He stood among his “boys,” as he called them, chatting gaily, and telling them how twenty years before, he had marched through the same village with a large column, as a mere “Sub ;” and how the cholera had swept more into their graves than the shot and swords of the enemy. There was old Major Hearty too ; who winked and smiled pleasantly at old recollections, as the Colonel told some familiar tale of camp-life, or hand to hand encounters with some fierce-whiskered Rohilla chief. But among the younger Officers there was one pale-faced delicate looking man ; and another who was most fiery red-faced. The pale-faced apparently had his constitution undermined by the climate, and the red-faced one by a too freed use of the contents of a certain brightly-labelled bottle. Pale-face was a Captain and his name

was Josiah Nerton. Now this man, though his face was pale, his manner and exterior gentlemanly, and his address pleasing to his fellow men, was nevertheless a scoundrel ; a deep plotting scoundrel as bad as Iago. There now we've let the cat out of the bag much sooner than we intended. At first we thought to mystify you, reader—to make your impression of Nerton a very good one, till you had read half the story, and then suddenly undeceive you. But Captain Nerton had deceived too many for half the term of his natural life to admit of our allowing him to deceive you for half a minute. He was handsome, tall, and had a finely formed figure, and all this gave you the idea that he could not have been a very bad fellow at heart but he was a first-rate actor, and as he was always acting, his audience merely saw in him, a well-disposed, gentlemanly, and good-natured fellow, one “ full of love and honesty,” though in reality, Nerton, in his own quiet green room “ wore his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at.”

The red-faced Officer was a thoroughly different personage both in figure and character. He never acted—he had never been known to act either publicly or privately. He could not make one muscle of his face assume a look which his mind within did not harmonize with. He was a blunt good-natured fellow, rather short in person, as well * as speech—and with by no means a diminutive

waist. His features were slightly pitted with small pox, which seemed to prevent a fair, and regular growth of his whiskers and moustaches ; for they grew thinly and sparsely in some places, and in thick tufts in others, giving him a droll appearance, which, with a certain twinkling look in the corners of his funny little grey eyes, was by no means unpleasing. He had not much determination of character, or if he had, he would not have given way to the Demon of drink which was now gaining a powerful influence over him. He was an Irishman, and his name—O'Rourk, was as Irish as himself, and he was one of those too often heedlessly called jolly fellows because they drink and swagger and spend their money freely and recklessly to their own detriment. All his brother Officers liked O'Rourk, and many of the wiser ones, (amongst whom was Gough,) had often advised him to try and give up the habit which was fast gaining a hold upon him, that of gratifying his taste for "strong waters."

But there was a third whom we must also give a slight sketch of, in order to satisfy the mind's eye.

He was Charles Henry Gough, the Adjutant of the Regiment. He was a tall, very strongly made fellow of about six or seven and twenty ; compactly built, and with arms and chest as muscular as a prize-fighter's. His face was decidedly handsome, and there was such a genial look of good humour

shining out of it, that it won people's favorable opinions at first sight. He had light brown curly hair cut short like a Roman gladiator's ; large mild-looking light blue eyes, and a fair Saxon skin that seemed to keep its hue in spite of exposure to the sun. Though thought to be a trifle *soft* among his brother Officers, Gough was a steady sober fellow, with a thoroughly honest heart, but with a rather rough excitable one ; with all his good humour he could be a lion if aroused, and knowing this, and thinking it a weakness, he did his best to avoid every *row* as he called it. If ever there was an honest face in the world, it was his, and if you were at-all a physiognomist, reader, you would have picked him out of that group of Officers, as the one who would stick to you in friendship through thick and thin.

As the Colonel, Major Hearty, and Captain Mackey, the only married Officers with the Regiment, soon went off to their different tents to look after their families, the bachelors settled themselves down to their own peculiar enjoyments, and to indulge in that freedom of manner which the presence of superiors invariably serves to check.

O'Rourk, unbuttoning his coat from top to bottom, and flinging away his sword, gave his orders—comprised in two letters with a conjunction between—to a remarkably black Mess-servant in a huge turban who stood in readiness.

“S. and B.”

Now O'Rourke had had two glasses of this decoction already; one at 3 A. M. before starting, and another at 5 o'clock during a short halt.

“Half glass, or whole glass brandy sar?” asked Big Turban.

“Whole glass of coorse, ye Kaffre,” returned O'Rourke contemptuously. “When did you iver hear me ordherin' half a one?”

Big-Turban did not deem it necessary to answer this question—he merely turned to obey “Master's order,” with a calmness of visage that showed he was used to harsh tones.

O'Rourke turned round towards his brother Officers, and saw the clear honest blue eye of the Adjutant fixed on him with a half pitying, half wondering expression.

Jack O'Rourke felt uncomfortable.

“Why can't he let a fellow drink a drop or two if he likes?” thought he “it can't hurt him at any rate,” but the next moment he thought differently. “He's quite right—I'm a fool to do it, but I can't help it.”

This young man was getting fast conquered by his habit. Though at first it was but a mere dwarf, that he could easily have vanquished with the slightest resolution, this secret enemy of his grew to its present magnitude, a perfect giant—so big that poor little O'Rourke lost courage to face it and

gave in at once.—Pop!—his enemy triumphed and laughed at him; the brandy and soda water was fizzing, and gurgling down his throat; the tumbler held to his mouth by a shaking hand.

“Who’s going *shikaring** to-day?” asked Nerton, leaning back in an easy chair, with his really beautiful dark eyes fixed on a rocky chain of hills about five or six miles in front of the tent.

“I’m going, and to try and get a bear.”

The answer came from a flaxen-haired slightly made youth of a ruddy countenance, on which no signs of hair were yet visible. It was evident he had not been long in the Honorable E.I.C.’s Service, as also that he had a desire to become renowned among his friends at home, as a “mighty hunter.”

“What a careless dog you are, Boots,” said a greyish haired man, who sat beside him. “Leaving your duty and Hindostanee all for mere vain attempts to get some animal’s hide.”

The young man consigned his duty and the above-mentioned language, to a certain very dreadful place, and muttered something about his “not being a slave.”

Here an Officer whose name was Dillon, and whose favorite hobby was to break in upon some conversation or remark with an appropriate sentence, or verse of some song—burst out with—

“Britons never—never—NEVER—will be slaves.”

* Hunting or sporting.

"I'll tell you what it is, youngster," said the old Captain, turning to the one he had addressed as Boots. "Though you *are* no slave, you *must* do your duty, and as I'm your Captain I'll see that it will be done."

"Its not my duty to keep mugging at that vile lingo," said the youth, imprudently.

"You came into the service to work, not to play, Mr. Smiley," returned the other, "and if you don't choose to work, you must be made to do so, or else leave the service."

The Boots of the Regiment became silent, and thought himself bored and bullied.

Meanwhile during this and other conversations taking place among the group of Officers, Nerton was still gazing listlessly and silently at the chain of hills in front of him. When he heard the lad rebuked, his color slightly changed, and any one watching him closely, might have observed the smallest, faintest beginning of a smile playing around his mouth, but he was too good an actor to show any feelings of pleasure which he wished to be hidden, so every sign of a smile quickly vanished, and he looked as grave as ever.

"I hear there are cheetahs about here" said Hillier, a fine, tall, brown-whiskered sub, who was seated smoking a long Trichinopoly cheroot.

"I'm going to try and have a bang at one at any rate, Long legs," said another, an aristocratic-

looking fellow with a telescope in his hand, with the help of which he had been examining the afore-said hills. "There's a cheetah look over there—I may say a Tiger look about the whole place. Timmah tells me he hears there's one about."

"Was that the man you brought up with you, Cocky?" asked Gough with a smile.

"Yes, and a first-rate sportsman he is," replied the other, whose registered surname was not Cocky, but Harris. "He has a splendid eye, and a light foot. I'll back Timmah to kill a tiger before any one black or white."

N. B.—Harris *alias* Cocky was always backing somebody or something to do something before, or better than, some other body or something else could do it.

"Your vast experience is great authority for your words, Cocky," laughed Hillier. "When did you ever see him shoot anything?"

"Why he put a splendid shot into that bear we knocked over the other day," replied Harris. "And because I bet him a rupee he couldn't do it, he put a bullet smack through a large butterfly's wings while it was resting on a bush at twelve paces off. D'ye call that nothing?"

Here Dillon immediately mounted his hobby.

"For—she was as beautiful as a butterfly,
And as proud as a queen,
Was the pretty little Polly Perkins
Of Paddington Green."

"If I hav'nt gained experience in Tiger-shooting yet—by Jove I intend to try and gain it very shortly," continued Harris; "there's nothing like striking while the iron's hot, and the cause is good. I'll have a skin or two in my tent yet before we reach Sandybad."

"Shure and I'll go shikaring with you too, man," put in O'Rourk, with his rich Galway brogue. "May be, we won't just pepper the cat if he comes our way—why not start to-day?"

"I'm sorry to tell you, you'll be sold, Jack, if you expect to go out shooting to-day," said Gough, puffing huge clouds of smoke round his good humoured face.

"Why so?" asked O'Rourk.

"Because you're Officer of the day, and must stay in camp."

"Oh blow it, so I am; I quite forgot, but you might let a fellow go for a few hours."

"Colonel's orders—must obey," said Gough, smiling. "There are the men turning out for Guard Mounting, I'll go and inspect them; come along and march them off."

"March! March! Ettrick and Teviotdale!"

sung out Dillon, as Gough walked away towards the tents, with his steel scabbard clattering beside him.

"Bye the bye, Smiley," said O'Rourk, "don't

forget that you're my supernumerary to-day." You'll have to come and march off the guards too."

"There—just hear this," replied the young man, in a vexed tone, "Why I'm crammed with work, as full as a doll is crammed with saw-dust.—by Jove I won't stand it any longer."

"Don't talk nonsense, but come along," said O'Rourke, "and take a liquor, Boots, before you start. I'm going to have another peg ; and we'll go off together. Here Boy ! two brandies and sodas, and look sharp about them."

"Its deuced hard lines, that they give me such a lot of duty to do," remarked Smiley, as he perceived that his Captain had left his side, and was sauntering towards his tent. "Danniels bullies me ; the Colonel bullies me ; and Gough bullies me."

"What should they bully you for, man ?" asked O'Rourke. "I'll tell you. The Colonel bullies, because I don't funk him ; Danniels, because I cheek him now and then, and Gough just to curry favor with the Colonel and get into Miss Maurice's good graces."

"Pooh !—stuff !!—nonsense !!!" said O'Rourke contemptuously, as he gulped down B and S No. 4.

"I think there may be some truth in what Smiley says," remarked Nerton, quietly.

"No, there isn't !" burst out O'Rourke, handing his glass back to Big-turban, who stood waiting for it, "or if there is, he brought it on himself."

Smiley knows as well as the whole of us that he's a confoundedly careless chap. He won't mind what he's told. Shure he was at dhrill about eight months, because he'd niver attind in time. And you might as well be roaring to a deaf man, as advising him. Bedad it wouldn't be telling him, and cautioning him, if he was in any other Corps, I'll warrant."

"I wish to Heaven, I was in any Corps but this," retorted the youngster, "but you're not so fond of your duty yourself, Jack; for all your tirade against me. You don't get bullied for it either. I often think a few words from Gough to the Colonel would lighten half my duty, but he's so sweet on Miss Maurice that he doesn't care how I'm bullied."

"There—drink your liquor, and come along," said O'Rourk, half angrily, "and don't talk lightly of Miss Maurice any more, Boots, or we'll quarrel; she's a friend of mine, and I won't hear any one speak ill of her. Toss off your B and S, and come along," and off went careless Jack, whistling gaily; the sturdy fool never casting a thought on his own immense failing.

Boots drank his liquor, and rose to go.

"Come over to my tent, Smiley, when your work's done: I want to have a talk to you," said Nerton.

"All right," replied the other.

"Poor fellow," murmured Nerton, in a low

tone, before Smiley was out of hearing. He intended it to be heard and it *was* heard. The griff thought that Nerton sympathised with him, and he thought it kind and good of him ; and thus Nerton won poor careless Boots' friendship to serve—as the sequel will show—his own ends.

CHAPTER III.

NERTON'S ADVICE.

SMILEY'S work was soon over, as he had only to say, "Form fours right—to your Guards—quick—march!" O'Rourk looking on all the time in great complacency. As they walked towards their tents together, Smiley remembered that he had to go to Nerton's; so parting from O'Rourk, he at once sought the first-named worthy's tent, and was soon seated comfortably in deep conversation with that plausible individual.

It would take too long to go through all they said to each other during the hour and a half they sat tented thus together; but when Smiley rose to go, the subject of Nerton's advice may be gathered from the few words he said to him, as they both stood at the tent door.

"Mind what I say Smiley, my lad; don't cringe to any one whatever you do. There's many a well-intentioned fellow in the service, as diffident as you are as to your duties, but they don't get half the wiggings you get, simply because they don't bow and smile, and lick the hand that strikes them. The Colonel has evidently taken a grudge against you, only don't say I said so—all you have to do is

to show him and his creatures that you're not to be bullied, and you'll find they'll soon drop it. As for Gough—chaff him, whenever you get an opportunity, about Miss Maurice; tell him he's making a deuced fool of himself with that girl; and that every one in the Regiment sees it. If you can make him get into a rage with you so much the better, but don't let yourself get angry with him about it; pretend to advise him like a friend not to be caught by the first pious young woman who sets her cap at him; say it will spoil him, and that its spoiling him already with all the fellows. I know Gough perfectly; he'll be furious at first; but he'll give her up after a little, and side with you; just see if he doesn't. And look here, Smiley; don't cotton up to that sot O'Rourke so much. He's a worthless ass, and drinking his brains away—he's in the Gough clique too, besides. I don't owe any one of them a grudge thank God; but I don't like to see them all set upon you like this. You're a young fellow you see, rather careless perhaps, but not deserving of all this. Now don't go and tell people what I've told you; for it would be deuced hard lines to get me into hot water for standing your friend."

"All right," said poor Boots, "I'll never mention your name, but I'll take your advice—thank you Nerton," and out he went, fairly taken in. He did not think that this advice was given out of any thing more than a friendly feeling towards him on

Nerton's part, and deeming that worthy much more clever, and experienced than himself; he determined to act upon his baneful advice. "He's quite right," thought the poor young goose, as he walked quickly along. "I knew I wasn't wrong about their bullying me. He knows it, and he's been a good while in the service too. I'll show them I can't stand it any longer—and won't stand it;" and with this foolish purpose in his brain he entered the tent which he shared with Gough; and throwing off his sword and jacket, lay back on his camp cot, and prepared at once to act on Nerton's counsel.

Gough was undressing for his bath, and was in the act of pulling off his stocking when the first shot was fired.

"You think her a precious fine girl; don't ye, Gough eh?—ha ha ha."

Gough's honest open face looked up with a broad smile over it in a moment.

"Which girl?—what girl?"

"Oh you know who I mean—by Jove you're getting nicely into the trap."

"Am I—how?"

"I don't know how—I suppose *she's* the best judge of that."

"Who?"

"Oh, now don't pretend you don't know—I tell you, man, she has been setting her cap at you from

first to last, and she'll hook you yet if you don't look out : Old Mother Maurice is trying to stick you with that girl as sure as fate."

Gough's face grew perfectly crimson with rage at this insult to his young lady friend. It was perfectly true that he had plunged into an ocean of love over head and ears for Miss Maurice. He had never sought to hide it from any of his brother Officers ; indeed, it would have been perfectly useless to have done so ; for the "spoony" man is picked out very easily among his brother Officers ; and then his confidants generally "chaff," or counsel him in private ; not in public, for its a dangerous thing to do. Harmless "chaff" thrown at the lover, may be tolerated, but in these cases it must be personal, and therefore rouses indignation very justly. Now Charlie Gough could laugh at, and bear "chaff," as well as any one, but he was of a quick hot temperament, and he certainly could not look upon what was now said to him in the light of "chaff." He took it for just what it was—a down-right insult.

"Smiley—shut up ; I advise you—you're insulting my friends."

"Didn't intend to, then," returned Boots, doggedly, but you're becoming such an awful fool, spooning on that girl, that you wont listen to reason."

"You infernal young whelp!" thundered Gough,

standing up beside his bed, with only his shirt and one stocking on, "do you want to be turned neck and crop out of the tent?"

Smiley reddened in his turn, and glared at Gough. He wasn't wanting in pluck; but he knew he was in the wrong, and Gough's towering figure and indignant face coupled with that knowledge cowed him slightly—he turned uneasily on his cot, and muttered, "you needn't blackguard me like that though; one would think you were born in Billingsgate."

"By Heavens, Smiley! I'm not to be insulted with impunity, and you find that out, if you take any more liberties with the names of my friends," and down he plumped on his bed, and proceeded to take the remaining stocking off. The entrance of Gough's boy for a moment or two prevented Smiley's firing another bitter shot at his poor friend's friends—but when the servant left he fired one directly at him.

"Gough, you're a spoon."

"Don't speak to me, Smiley, unless its to beg my pardon."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the other, and then jumping up from his cot, he took his forage-cap in his hand, placed it over his heart, and made Gough a low bow, with mock humility. "Your humble bullied servant Sir, I beg your pardon, my lord—will that do?"

"Go to "———" thundered Gough, in his fury.

Reader—you perceive our hero was no angel.

“ Well, you’re uncommon hard to please, I must say” laughed Smiley “ reseating himself. Ah Gough—she has spoiled you, man—spoiled you completely.”

Gough bit his lip, and was silent. Smiley carelessly went on with his keen sarcasm.

“ There’s no use in being savage about it, you know, Gough, I suppose you’ve gone too far, to turn back now though ; so its useless advising you. Cupid’s blind you know, and you don’t know how you’re being made a fool of. Take my advice old fellow, and cut the concern.”

“ Keep your insulting advice to yourself, Mr. Smiley, I warn you,” cried Gough, rising and clenching his fist—his blue eyes sparkled with a fire that Smiley had never seen in them before. “ If I hear you mention the subject again, I swear I’ll kick you out of my tent.”

“ He-he-he-he—ha-ha-ha—ho-ho” laughed the reckless Boots.

Gough took two or three steps forward, intending no doubt to put his threat into execution, but his better nature overcame his passion before he crossed the tent. He calmed himself with a great effort, and going up to the lad with a very different expression from that he had started with—he laid his hand heavily on his shoulder, and looked straight into his face. Smiley could not stand the

look of those bright blue expressive eyes ; he turned away his head sheepishly, and tried to shake Gough's hand off—but he couldn't.

“ Don't Smiley—don't my boy,” said Gough, “ let me look at you.”

“ What do you want to see ?”

“ I want to see whether you're really in your senses, or out of them.”

“ There then”—facing round, and boldly looking up at him, “ what d'ye think ?”

“ I'm sorry for you my boy—very sorry for you—sorry to think that you could be so unjust as to try and provoke an unmeaning quarrel, and make me a fool as well as yourself. I can't understand what on earth you mean by it. What have I done that you should provoke me thus ?”

The words went like a sharp blow to Smiley's heart. The poor boy felt that the honest fellow before him had never yet injured him willingly in any way. He would at once have told him so, but Nerton's pernicious advice was fresh in his memory.

“ Why you provoke me yourself ?”

“ I confess I don't see how.”

“ Under the pretence of zeal, and all that, you bully me, as you don't bully the rest.”

“ You wrong me, Smiley—you do indeed ; I've been trying to shape you into something like a smart Officer, and you call that bullying ?”

“ Oh we all know what a red-hot soldier you

are. I wish to Heaven you'd let others sail in the same boat with you, without making them work as you do yourself."

"My dear fellow—let me ask you what work you really have to do. Out of the twenty-four hours, you've twenty entirely to yourself, and often nothing whatever to do—do you call that hard lines?"

"It's one thing to talk about it—and another to have to do it, Gough. If the Colonel chooses to take a grudge against me, you shouldn't join him in being hard on me for it—but I'll tell you what it is," he continued, as Gough went slowly to his own side of the tent, "I've got a return shot in my hands now, and I know how to use it."

"I think I know what you mean, Smiley—you fancy you've found a way to bully me—eh?"

Smiley nodded, knowingly.

"I don't care for your chaff," continued Gough; but I can't stand your insulting my friends."

"I thought you had been preached to so much, that you had the temper of a cherub, Gough—I hav'nt at any rate."

"Preached to? what d'ye mean?" cried Gough, his temper rising again, for Miss Maurice had the character of being a very religious young lady, (which was true). "Temper or no temper, you'd better not try and ruffle it, Mr. Smiley. So if you think you're going to bully me into letting you do

your duty carelessly, you'll find you're mistaken, and a goose to think so."

Boots would have retorted without doubt, but at this moment Dillon's good-natured face was seen between the bamboo *chicks* at the tent door, and having caught Gough's last words; he rode his hobby.

"Sweet Peggy, round her ear, Sir,
Has strings of ducks and geese, &c. &c."

This at once put at end to Smiley's retorting. Dillon had merely dropped in to ask Gough for the loan of his bullet mould, but as he and Gough were great friends, he plumped down in an easy chair, and began an animated chat about shooting and sporting in India in general. Smiley therefore swallowed the angry answer he was about to make Gough, and proceeded to his bath tent.

CHAPTER IV.

EVIL DESIGNS.

QUITE, inoffensive-looking Nerton sat all this time in his tent, evidently at perfect peace with all mankind, as well as with himself. As he had bathed while Smiley was with the guards, he looked as clean and neat to the human eye, as the outside of a newly white-washed sepulchre ; and now he sat diligently scraping his finger-nails with the file-blade of his little pen-knife, for he knew, as well as any one, the saying, "cleanliness is akin to godliness."

When Smiley left him, his barber came in to shave "Master," and had left him with the remark that he thought "Master's face ivry day gettin little plenty fat—sometime soon catch 'im red too, same like Mista Orook face." (He meant poor O'Rourk's). Nerton pretended not to like the idea of this at all, and explained to the barber that he was not given to the use of ardent liquors "same like other gentlemen." However when the sanctionary with the razor had left the tent, (stropping his blade upon the palm of his hand, and scraping the soap-suds off his bare arm, where he had placed them for convenience sake, while

shaving,) Nerton rose and looked in his glass upon the outside of his bodily cup and platter, and really was delighted to imagine that his cheeks were beginning to fill out slightly. He did not wish anybody to know that he had the slightest ailment of mind or body; he wished everybody to think him the most contented of human beings, though he really was not so. Six months before, there was merely a slight burning in his heart, which he never tried to put out, and so it went on burning, and burning, like a slow match, till it ignited a large mine, which in its turn kept burning secretly like Mount Vesuvius, till the time came for it to explode. The truth was that Nerton having seen Miss Maurice, and taken a liking to her, had kept the match in his heart ready to light, and when, after a few weeks, he fell in love with her, and saw it was hopeless to do so, he lit the match, and the burning commenced.

There is no doubt but that he loved her very much; not wisely nor too well; but with the strongest, deepest, passionate love that man is capable of. At first the thought never entered his mind that any one else would attempt to love her; he was so far gone in his own dreams of her that he was perfectly oblivious to the fact that other men had also the privilege of dreaming of her; and though she certainly did not seem to care for

his attentions more than those of others, he felt certain that the course of his love would run on smoothly for ever. Judge then of his consternation—his secret agony, when it dawned suddenly upon him that Charles Gough admired and courted the very young lady, he thought was destined to be his own wife, and that she—that was the worst thought to him—evidently reciprocated this growing attachment. From the very day Captain Nerton found this out, he began to act better than he had ever done before. The fire in his heart burned him, and pained him dreadfully; but his face wore a gay healthy look, and he continued to smile and appear as happy as any best man at a joyous wedding. He joined in all gaiety and amusement with apparent relish; tiffed, dined, and drank tea with Colonel and Mrs. Maurice in high spirits, but at the same time, never in his mind, giving up the idea that Miss Maurice must be *his* wife, and nobody else's; so his high spirits cost him a tremendous struggle which only served to burn his heart deeper and give him more pain. As for trying to forget her and making up his mind to do without her, that was impossible to him. He thought he loved her too well to do anything of the sort. His was not a common-place love, not it. It was an enduring one—and he would go through fire and water, and commit any amount of crime to win her—so he

determined in his heart, that while he was alive, she would never be the bride of another; as for going up to her, and telling her boldly of this love, entreating and imploring her to become his wife—he could'nt or wouldn't do that. What! stake this precious love of his on such a chance, when he was almost certain she was giving her heart to another? No, that he wouldn't! Besides, would he not be the very man to be suspected, in case it would become necessary for him to get Gough out of the way by foul means? So he kept it all to himself, and acted so remarkably well that no one in the world, except Miss Maurice herself, had the smallest idea that he entertained a single spark of love for her, and she only thought it might be so, and was sorry for it. But as he went on acting indifference to her, she thought nothing whatever of it.

The other infatuated lover knew nothing whatever of all the pain he was unwittingly giving his brother Officer. There is no knowing what he might have done if he had known it—for his was an open generous heart which strongly objected to its owner hurting the feelings of any earthly creature—and so he went indulging in the growing love he was not ashamed of, and trying to win the young lady's good graces.

Meanwhile Nerton went on fostering his hot love, and his still hotter jealousy; and these two

in a marvellously short time brought forth a fierce hate for his rival. A hate so intense—so ardent—that he in whose breast it lodged, thought of nothing else than his rival's death. Even if Gough gave her up to him without any ado, he would still have nourished that foul longing to take his life—for the former had dared to love *her*—*her*, *his* greatest treasure—had made the attempt to rob him of her. No! he *would have* his life.

Reader—as Nerton never went for advice to any friend on earth or heaven, he could no more in his own weak sinful heart, check that hate, than he could have stopped a 5,000 horse power locomotive going at full speed, by putting his back to the buffers!

Before we introduced him to you, he had three times attempted Gough's life, but so skilfully as to be totally unsuspected of sinister designs either by him, or others. He had shot at him, (accidentally!) one day while forming one of a large party in search of a tiger; but he had missed him by about four inches, and as two accidents from the same gun, pointing in the same direction, would be of too suspicious a character, he did not shoot at him again. Another time while out shooting with his ingenuous rival, he almost persuaded him to eat some large red strichnine berries, which they found growing in the jungle; but Gough, saying he was not either hungry or thirsty just then, only kept a few

but was saved the trouble of sending it by the latter entering the tent, just as the note was folded.

Dr. Milton was a short, fussy, consequential little man who spoke in short apoplectic gasps, as though long sentences would choke him.

"How d'ye do—Nerton my boy? eh—pale still I see—pulse? let's feel—hum—all right—how's the head—no pain?—tongue?—let's see—ha—clean enough—you're all right—take care o' yourself—now d'ye feel?"

"Oh there's nothing wrong with me, that I know of, Milton." Always saying so—don't believe it—something wrong—feverish perhaps—eat well?"

"Yes heartily."

"Bouls?"

"All right."

"Skin hot?"

"No"

"Cold then?"

"No."

"Sleep well?"

"N—o—; not exactly."

"Thought so—careless dog—wont tell—got to pump you—not stomach pump—answer pump—he—he—he! Get wet this morning—eh? crossing that river—water pretty deep—wasn't it?"

"Oh I rode across all right."

"More than I did—plumped into a hole—dark you know—dark as pitch—I couldn't see—herse

couldn't see. He in first—I after him—splashing about both of us—good bath he—he—he!”

“Ha, ha, ha—and a very cold bath you must have found it too Doctor,” laughed Nerton.

“Cold!—not a bit—refreshing—but clothes wet, you know—couldn't stand that—no one can—galloped back—found my *bandy**—dry clothes on, in one jiffy—Mufty—felt all jolly—right way you know—take care o' No. 1—my maxim—precious good one.”

“That it is, Milton—I flatter myself, I act up to it too.”

“Not a bit—not a bit—not half care o' yourself—going out shooting, eh?”

“A short stroll in the evening, nothing more—I'll try and bag a partridge or two.”

“Ah quite right—short stroll—evening—sun too hot in daytime—don't, tempt it—I'll send you something—put ye to sleep—sound 'sleep.”

“Take care you don't make me late for the march to-morrow morning, Doctor; that would not suit my book, you know.”

“March!—no march, to-morrow—halt—just been to Colonel's—recommended it—you fellows tired—want rest, and all that—careful o' you, you see—like a father t'ye—none o' ye care—deuced ungrateful—I'm going fishing all to-morrow—

* Or Bullock Cart.

splendid tank and river—rods, lines, bait, all ready. —I'll send the stuff—Morphine—Opium—something—Tata ! “and away went the little disciple of Aristotle, and Isaac Walton, to get medicine, and fishing apparatus ready.

“ Well, that point's settled !” mentally ejaculated Nerton, seating himself again ! “not a drop of that stuff I swallow. I'll find an opportunity to dose *him*, I've no doubt”—and so he went on maturing his plans for nearly an hour, till he felt hungry, and got up to adjourn to the Mess-tent for breakfast.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG THE TODDY TREES.

THAT first evening, when the Regiment was encamped at Rajooloopettah, was bright and beautiful. The sun had not yet gone down, though near the verge of the horizon. Masses of soft fleecy silver-edged clouds floated over his blood-red disc, and shut out his roasting, toasting rays. People were beginning to stir themselves in the Camp. The Sepoys were assembling for dress roll-call, and were cleanly, and neatly attired in their own peculiar costumes. Some of them had already squatted down, as only an Oriental can squat, and had begun to scrub zealously at their bayonets, till they were almost as bright as looking-glasses. Others were pipe-claying their belts, till they laid on enough to make them as hard as deal-boards, or cleaning out their old *Brown Besses* with vicious stabs and tugs at the ram-rod. There was the usual hum of voices, which is generally attendant on these parades. Some were humming airs, without a particle of tune, in a very nasal key; others were poking fun around them, or vehemently arguing with each other; while the zealous looking Non-Commissioned Officers were commanding, suggesting, or threatening, as the fancy crossed them.

An old Indian might easily perceive the different *castes* of men among this large crowd of Sepoys, for though they were all Natives of the same vast country, there was some difference in appearance between those whose rank and religion differed. There was the high caste Seyd Musselmaun, in his large but neatly rolled* *pugree* ; his embroidered *cupchah* or waistcoat of bright colors, and his ample yellow satin drawers. There was the athletic well-built Pathan, with his small muslin scull-cap on the crown of his head, and his whiskers and mustaches twisted fiercely up towards his ears. The sleek-looking high caste Hindoo was there also. There could be no mistaking the long white night-shirt sort of dress, (the waist-band of which just past under the arm-pits of the wearer,) and the cotton cloth twisted in a very odd manner round his legs and loins. This sort of individual wore stripes of red or yellow paint on his forehead, and a stripe of white sandal-wood ashes just beneath each eye-brow, while from the upper part of his ear there dangled a short gold chain, at the end of which a colored glass bead was suspended. The Rajpoot, or Bengalee Sepoy too, was there. He considers himself of immensely high caste, and is very particular in making the others keep their distances when off duty. He is a small and

* Turban.

very scrupulous eater, and the greatest *screw* in the Regiment. He has hundreds of Rupees somewhere, all saved out of his scanty pay, for he puts himself on short commons with great good-will. He is hardly ever so profuse in his dress, as in his ornaments of beads and silver, and streaks of white ashes. He daubs the latter over his arms, shoulders, chest, neck, ears, and forehead, as if he could not live without this sad disfigurement of his personal appearance. There were numbers of other different styles of men, which would take a whole volume to describe properly. All these men sat or stood in a broad straggling line opposite their row of tents, and made the whole camp ring with a very Babel of different languages, as they washed, scrubbed, sponged, polished, and dried. Far to the right, were pitched the four hospital tents, near which sat a few sickly looking wretches, cooking or eating the invariable rice ; and on the left, the ponies and horses of the Officers were picketed in long lines ; some of them being rubbed down, and cleaned by their nimble Syces, and others pawing the ground and whinnying for their gram, which was being boiled not far off in huge chatties.

The whole of this could be seen and heard easily from a small rising ground about a thousand yards from the Camp, on which there now sat two persons--a lady and a gentleman. They had a nice

little clump of toddy trees, or short stunted date palms around them, with their trunks distorted and twisted, by the efforts the toddy gatherers had made to extract their vegetable juices. These trees opened out a little in front, and showed the clean white Camp stretching in a long vista over the plain beyond them, with the travellers' bungalow to the left, and the village further back. Masses of granite rock were interspersed here and there among the trees, and it was upon one of these that the lady was seated. She was certainly very pretty. Her eyes were dark and sparkling; and her mouth when she laughed, which she did with a clear merry ring, showed a set of beautifully white teeth, behind a pair of—well, very sweet looking lips. Her hair—ah! that was not by any means the least point in her beauty—was luxuriant and glossy, of a black brown color, and though simply parted in front and braided *en masse* behind her little ears would, if allowed to float free as our English sea-side beauties allow theirs to do, have covered her like a silky cloak to her waist. She was small and slight altogether, and it really seemed as though a little puff of wind could overbalance her slender figure, and throw her from the rock on which she sat. She was gazing at the Camp in front, and holding in her hand her little jungle-fowl feathered-hat, while the stalwart young gentleman who reclined in an easy

attitude on the grass near her pretty feet, kept up a conversation with her in a soft tone. She had come out with her father and mother to take a little sketch of the Camp, but they had gone for a short walk, and had left her under the care of the Adjutant.

"Oh it's very beautiful indeed, Miss Maurice." He was referring to the scene before them, but his eyes were not in its direction; they were fixed with a soft dreamy gaze on the young lady's face.

"How I do admire these Indian evenings, Mr. Gough," she remarked, "There is something so exquisitely soft and balmy about them."

"And yet they don't half come up to the glorious summer evenings at home."

"Well, perhaps not, but they are so refreshing after the extreme sultriness of the day, that we value them more highly. I have never enjoyed them so much as I have done on this march; and then the Camp has been so often pitched in such pretty spots. Do you know that I have made several sketches of them?"

"I noticed that you brought a sketch book out with you, Miss Maurice. Will you let me look at it?"

The book was immediately handed to him. Now Gough was no judge of drawing; he could hardly tell a palmyra tree from a cabbage, but he nevertheless was profuse in his praises of these. He

held them out at arms' length, shut one eye, and shading the open one with his hand, poured forth his eulogies.

"Oh how pretty ! why I declare there's a sentry, and I know a man exactly like him too ; you must have taken his likeness. But why have you made the tents at one end of the line smaller than those at the other ?"

"Oh that's perspective."

"Don't know much about that, Miss Maurice," said the young man, innocently, as he turned over another leaf.

"Oh this is really nice ; what a distance off the Camp is. Here's the Colonel too as sure as a gun, sitting on a rock in this lower corner."

"Yes, that's the fore-ground. I drew papa in it just to set it off."

"And he *does* set it off capitally. What a hand you are at drawing figures ; let's look at the next."

"Why you have the Regiment marching in here : and here's somebody on horse-back. It's very like *my* horse too. Is the rider meant for me, Miss Maurice ?"

"I don't think it's meant for any one in particular," replied the young lady with a slight blush, "but if it pleases *you* to think so, you may" and she began quietly putting in the outline of the scene before them.

Now reader, Gough had arrived at that state,

(of love and esteem for the little lady above him) which makes lovers try to lead the conversation into a channel from whence they can glide into the subject nearest their hearts, and *pop*. How many things have been spoken of by lovers, with which the heart has nothing whatever to say; though perhaps the whole time it is longing to unburden itself; but can't find a suitable opportunity. Our big-bodied and big-hearted hero, therefore gave a little sigh of disappointment; as he thought how cool she seemed to be towards him in giving him this last answer. Little did he think she also was trying to lead the conversation towards the same end, but by a different channel. She knew perfectly well that he was in love with her; at least that he esteemed and admired her, but she had her own opinions about this, as you will see.

There was a short pause in the conversation; and during this, Gough looked over the other pictures in silence, and handed her back the book.

"This is a lovely view of the Camp," the young lady began, "and a lively one too. The men all seem so busy and so happy. But somehow it often makes me have sad feelings; it's all meant for horrid War—for God's creatures to fight among themselves, and spill each other's blood." She said this in a grave tone, and straight from pure innocence, and honesty of heart. Gough pushed his little Jim-crow hat off his forehead, and looked up at

held them out at arms' length, shut one eye, and shading the open one with his hand, poured forth his eulogies.

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her with a wondering smile ; such a thought had never entered the young soldier's head, but after a little, he said,

“ It's all meant to preserve peace.”

“ Ah yes, by force of arms, and that necessarily involves bloodshed. Men ought to love their enemies.”

“ I suppose they ought ; but they don't. It would be a queer world if they did.”

“ It would be a glorious world. Oh, Mr. Gough, I love the glory of arms, and all that, far too well I'm afraid ; but when I think of the other side of the picture, it's really horrible—detestable. I read the account of a battle some time ago, and it seemed so like wholesale murder, that it made me cry so much.”

“ Humph ! ” remarked Gough. “ Women always do.”

“ Mr. Gough, I want to know your feelings about it ; have you ever killed a fellow-creature ? ”

Here was a point-blank question, which the young lover did not quite know at first how to answer. He *had* killed his fellow-men in the Burmese War, and his fellow-men had often tried to kill him in that Campaign ; and out of it too.—Vide page 37. At last he framed an answer.

“ I had to do my duty, you know ; so I believe I have. But then I never said I wasn't sorry for it. Soldiers must do their *duty* in action, as well

as out of it. If I didn't kill them, they would have killed me; now mind I don't say I enjoy it, but if it became my *duty* to do so to-morrow, I would fight willingly."

The young Officer pronounced the word "duty" with the same emphasis as I can imagine Wellington, Napoleon, or Nelson to have laid upon it.

"I hope you won't have to do it again."

"I hope not certainly. I'd rather not have recourse to bloodshed; but I know many who are very fond of War, and partial to personal encounters—some boast of what they've done in that way, out of no bad motive. Mr. O'Rourke does, for instance."

"Oh, the poor wretch—boasts of having stained his hands with his fellowmen's ———. It's nothing to boast of, I'm sure. But Mr. Gough," she continued, in a lower tone, "do you—have you noticed him—I mean, have you remarked that he—that he drinks too much?"

"Noticed it!" cried Gough, his blue eyes lighting up in an instant, "that I have, too plainly; I like poor Jack very much indeed, but I must say he's a donkey; he's so obstinate."

"Don't judge him too harshly Mr. Gough, he's weak, as we all are. Have you ever tried to advise him to give it up?"

"I have, till I'm tired of it. He promises faithfully to give it up sometimes; so he does for a time; then he goes harder at it than ever."

"Poor man! ah, how I pity these young men, left thus to themselves, Mr. Gough. I often feel how useful a dear mother's or sister's counsel would be to them."

"That's the very thing we all want, Miss Maurice. There's no one to look after us in that way—no one for us to look to for comfort or advice in times we most need it. Not one!"

"You should not say that. I told you before, there is a kind, loving, precious Friend to go to, and tell all our troubles to, Mr. Gough," said the gentle voice, as the mouth which spoke bent down towards him, and the long eye-lashes became wet. "If you trusted to that firm Friend; that strong Love, far stronger than any earthly ties can give you, you would all never, never want comfort. Oh Mr. Gough, I pity you far more for not having God's love in your heart, than I do, because you have not a mother near you. If He was all in all to you, you could fall back upon Him for that support and advice, He promises so sweetly to grant."

"Miss Maurice!"—His handsome face was radiant with an admiring smile, and his blue eye swimming, as he thought of her gently spoken words. "I like to hear you talk to me like that; though I dislike others doing so. I don't know why, but I do."

"Don't think of that, Mr. Gough. Think of

what I'm telling you. You are very fearless and careless ; so you never think of the danger your soul is in. If you can't fear God, you must love Him. When you feel how wondrous and precious His love for you has been, and will be ; you will fear to lose that love. Love of Him must come before fear of Him."

Poor fellow ; he was so taken up with the love of the creature, that the love of the CREATOR was a secondary consideration to him.

"How good you are ! and your words are so kind. Miss Maurice, you are far too good for this world. You are an angel among men. I don't know how any one can see and hear you without thinking so."

"Please do not say that, Mr. Gough—I am no better than I should be. I am but a worm of the earth, as we all are. I cannot help pitying those poor people who have not God's love dwelling in their hearts ; and it seems hard of me not to give them a word of advice, when I know they are blindly going wrong. They must know they are going wrong. They do not always feel happy I'm sure."

"Gough looked up at the sad truthful little face, and his own grew sad too. "Ah ! you are right. I am not always happy for one. I am a wretched fellow sometimes when I have serious thoughts. I wish you would take me in hand, Miss

Maurice; you are so good and so reasonable to a careless man; not gorging him with religion, but making his own heart feel, and tell him what's right and what's wrong. I don't think enough of it. Will you take me in hand and make me a——a——what I ought to be?"

"I am a sinner—a weak mortal like yourself. I cannot make you what you ought to be, but I may be the poor instrument in God's hands of saving your soul; so I will tell you what to do. Go to Him at once. Tell Him all you need, and all the strength you require; that you know you want, to enable you to avoid the devil. Ask Him to give it to you for Christ's sake. The vilest sinner has a right to ask for God's love and pardon in Christ's name. He will not refuse you, if you ask in faith. Will you do this, Mr. Gough?"

"I can't—I don't know how." The sturdy young man's voice trembled. "I don't know how to do it."

"Will you try?"

He did not answer this important question for some time. He was thinking, for his mind was full of all sorts of things, the result of her question. He was wondering if there would really be any great advantage if he did try, and succeed.

Then he was thinking of her too. She was so good and lovely, that it would be a moral impossibility that she would advise him to do a thing that would

harm him. Would others laugh at him if he became a religious man? if he ever could be religious without *her*, and how easy it would be for him to become religious, if she loved him, and was his wife. Then there flashed across his mind a very unpleasant doubt, and that was, that she did not love or care for him now that he was not religious.

While he was thus thinking; she was praying. Aye, though seated still; her cheek resting on one hand, and her eyes fixed on the Camp before her, her heart was ascending in silent prayer for the strong stubborn rebel lying on the ground before her.

While both were thus occupied, a tall figure with long *samber*-skin boots, and a gun upon his shoulder, was coming up leisurely behind them; but the moment he caught sight of a little head with a twisted mass of black brown braids behind it, and a clear white little piece of neck beneath it, he stopped, stooped quickly, and began thinking too. Then he looked carefully around, and not seeing any one, left his gun at the foot of a tree, and crept up towards the little head with the black brown braids behind it, taking care to proceed very cautiously, and noiselessly, getting every shrub between himself and the aforesaid head, as he moved on. At last he got so close, that when he saw the head with the braids move a little, he heard the words, which Miss Maurice now repeated for the second time.

“Will you try?”

Then Nerton, for it was he, became certain of something that he had only guessed before; and that was, that some person was seated where he could not see him; but when Nerton heard that person's voice, he recognized it, and frowned and smiled at the same time, in as horrid a manner as it was possible to do.

“Yes, I will try,” said the voice, “if you tell me what to say.”

“Cannot your heart tell you what to say, Mr. Gough?”

“Yes—no—that is—I've never prayed, since I was a little boy at my mother's knee; and it seems useless to begin now. It is too much to forgive.”

“Not for God to forgive. He says, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow.’ Man is hard-hearted, and does not readily forgive injuries and insults; but God will forgive you for His Son's sake. But you must ask in faith. The dying thief did not doubt our Saviour's power and willingness to forgive him. He only trusted in Him, and asked Him to *remember* Him. Cannot you too do that?”

No answer. He felt he could do it; but not always, for he might tire of it.

“Supposing, Mr. Gough, you wished to ask one of your fellow mortals for some great favor, do you think you would ask for it, if you were certain it

would be refused ? but if that person had told you that, no matter how you had vexed and insulted him before, he was ready and willing to forgive you, and grant you any favor you asked, you would ask in faith. That is the faith you must have in God. Wont you ask him, then, in faith ?”

“ I don’t know what words to use,” said Gough, “ but I will, if you teach me ; I will indeed. Now I want to ask *you* something if you will let me.” He rose quickly on one knee, and gently took one of her little hands between his huge ones. “ Miss Maurice ! God knows what I wish now is sincere. I wish to be a truly good and pious man, with the love of God for ever in my heart ; but I could not be that—I never could be—without your gentle guidance and support. Miss Maurice—Ada—I love you, as I have never loved any one ! I will be a good husband to you, if you will let me ; and be my guide to Heaven.” He slowly removed the little hand that had gone up to cover her blushing face, now slightly turned away. “ Ada ! you can change my heart. I am not a pious man now, but I will be. I love you so much that you could guide me very easily. Ada ! darling Ada ! be my wife ; will you ?”

Oh ! how earnest and passionate he was, while uttering these simple words. His whole soul seemed shining in his bright blue eyes, which he never for a moment took off her face. Though she

had tried once or twice to disengage her hand, he held it with a firm hard grip that almost hurt her. It seemed as though he were holding a treasure, which he could never bear to lose. How earnestly he listened for his fate !

There was another, who was also as anxious for her answer, listening in trembling excitement.

"I cannot," she murmured at length. Her lip quivered, and her lover felt the hands, he held in his, grow cold.

The eaves-dropper's face wore a exulting smile.

But poor Gough's ? Oh if ever agony was depicted on human face, it was on his at that moment. The hard clasp with which he had pressed her hands relaxed, and his great strong figure shook like an aspen. At last he gasped with difficulty.

"Ah !—I am indifferent to you then !—you do not care for me, Ada. I did not think so indeed."

"Oh ! Charles, indeed, indeed you are not indifferent to me," and the little face full of tender pity and concern looked straight into his with wet lashes, and glistening eyes. "No, Charles, I will tell you the truth—I LOVE YOU !!"

Now it was the turn of the hidden listener to tremble and grow pale.

"Darling ! Darling Ada ! and I LOVE YOU TOO WITH MY WHOLE HEART ! Oh, why were you so cruel at first ?" Gough's face had brightened up gloriously. You would not have thought him the

same person that had been kneeling there so despairingly.

"I was not cruel, Charles ; I was just. I only answered your question. Oh, you have made me betray my heart ; and it must only vex you, for I cannot—dare not—marry you. It is my duty not to do so. It is hard to bear, but God will give me strength and comfort. You must try and conquer your love, and I will—try—to conquer—mine."

"Oh !" groaned the poor lover with a fresh pang of grief in his heart. "I see, Ada ! I am a fool, or I would have thought of that before. I am not good enough for you. But you should have mercy and pity on me. Oh ! do not be so cruel ! if you knew how I love you, you would be kinder. All my heart is yours ; you may shape it as you like. I know my defects. I know I am not good ; but you will teach me. There is no one, but yourself can do it. I can never get a teacher I love like you—never ! Ada—dearest ; be mine !"

The poor girl was struggling to calm herself, but her bosom heaved quickly with agitation, and large drops of tears rolled down her pale face. She could not stop them. At last she bent her head towards him, and spoke as composedly as her sobs would allow her.

"I know that you love me, Charles ; I do indeed. I will not deny that I knew it long before you spoke, but I—feared it—oh so much. I saw that

you loved me, and I couldn't prevent you,—because
—because I couldn't help—

Loving—you—too.

Oh it was so foolish of me, and I am so sorry ;
because now I must do what is right, though it
gives us both so much pain. I cannot marry you
till your heart is changed !”

“ But it is in your power to change it, Ada
dearest.”

“ There ! Charles, how could I marry a man who
says such a sinful, foolish thing as that ? I cannot
do it. I could never do such a thing. Do you think
I could rob God of His power over your heart ?
No, dear Charles, I love you too well to allow you
to deceive yourself by thinking so. I promise you
faithfully that I will not—for I cannot—love any
other man but yourself. Oh may God change
your heart, and bring you to love Him far—far
better than you love this weak fellow-sinner !”

“ It will be a hard thing for Him to do, if I am to
be without you in this world. Ada ! I never
could be a hypocrite—never. I will never pretend
to be what I am not ; and you will not always be
near me to speak to me so nicely, and advise me.
Besides even if I did become a true Christian,
others will say I was pretending to be so, merely
to marry you.”

“ Never mind what others say, Mr. Gough,” said

the young girl, in a cheering tone. "Go on persevering in the right way. If you truly love God, all your worldly love will be as dross before it. This may be meant as a great temptation to you and I, which by God's grace we are enabled to conquer."

"Ada—dearest ! forgive me ; but I know," continued the poor fellow, pertinaciously, "that if you leave me to fight the world by myself, I shall be defeated. I have never tried it. I'm sure to give in."

"What ! a great strong fellow, like you, give in ! not if you put on God's armour, and ask His help. You talked of your duty to man just now. Think of your duty towards God—and if He bids you fight against your evil inclinations, go forth bravely to battle. He'll help you, you'll find. I am so thankful now that He helped me to fight, and conquer in the great battle I have had just now with my own heart. It said 'Yes,' but God said 'No,' so I had to fight. Oh I am sure He intends it all for your good. Poor fellow," continued she, as she stroked his huge brown paw with her little hands. "I am very sorry for you, for I know what you must feel ; but the little pain I have had to give you now will lead to such great pleasure, that on some future day you may thank God for having given me strength to refuse to marry you."

"I don't think I shall," said Gough, doubtfully.

“ But I am sure you will, Mr. Obstinate. So you must try and forget this foolish love for me, and place yourself under an engagement with your Saviour for the safety of your soul. Come, we ought to be returning. Papa will be wondering what is keeping us all this time. Oh dear me, what a face I must have after all this ! We must stay a little longer, or we’ll be regular frights going into Camp together.” She was speaking gaily, to try and raise his spirits. He saw this, and made a sad effort to be gay too.

“ What ! is my face red too, Ada ? ”

“ Of course it is. You’ve been crying, you great baby ; but you must not call me Ada any more. Remember I’m only your friend, Miss Maurice, still ; and you must forget every thing about me, except my advice.”

Oh what a big heart this little woman had ! ready to sacrifice her strong love for him, that he might seek God’s love for himself. Down went his spirits again at these last words of her’s. He had not half the courage to meet trials that she had. He had never asked for it.

“ Oh what a glorious sun, Mr. Gough, get up, and come here ”—he obeyed mechanically, “ just see how it shines on the tents, and that piece of water there. It is very beautiful.”

As the two stood up to look at the splendid effects of light and shade thrown around by the great red

ball of fire, now just beginning to disappear, the listener, shaking like a guilty thief, "stole away." Had Gough seen him at that moment, he would, in his present state of mind, have no doubt broken every bone in his body, and perhaps much of his own future misery might have been thus averted. But as he had not eyes in the back of his head, the other got off unperceived ; found his gun, and strode away into the deep jungles, with a mixture of despairing and triumphant thoughts.

Aha Nerton ! something must be done, and that soon !

"How beautiful !" repeated the young girl, gazing at the soft purple and crimson lights thrown upon the undulating country around. "How very beautiful !"

"I shall never forget it," returned Gough. "It is lovely," but the rogue wasn't thinking of the scene around him or even looking at it. With his hands deep in his pockets ; his cap thrown back on his head, he was leaning against a tree, and gazing at HER.

"Do you know what I used to think about the sun, Mr. Gough, when I was a little child ? I imagined that there was a round hole cut in the blue sky, and that the light shining through it was the glorious

dazzling light of heaven. I used to think it would kill us to see more of its brightness, unless we were very good."

"Then it would never kill you, my—Miss Maurice, I mean. Oh I'll say it over, and over again, though you *have been* so cruel to me. You are all that is good, and true, and lovely," and as the sturdy soldier blurted out his opinion of her, a large tear rolled down his cheek, but he never attempted to wipe it away.

"It is you that are cruel, Mr. Gough."

The sad, and very tremulous whisper, that this was uttered in, showed the poor fellow what a struggle was going on in her heart. It was too much for him. He turned away his face; buried it in his hands, and sank down on the grass fairly sobbing with grief.

A soft little hand touched his shoulder in a moment or two. "Charles! is it fair to me, or yourself, to give way thus!"

He looked up. The tender loving little face was pale as ashes, but without a tear on it.

"Charles! answer me. Is it right I should bribe you with this love of mine, to seek God's love. Ah that motive would dishonor Him! So I cannot promise to marry you. Forget the creature, and remember the Creator. You wish to love Him; then put your faith in His love. You asked me for mine; you had faith in me, had you not? Well,

put much more faith in Him. Had you no earthly friend to advise you or speak words of comfort to you. He will stick to you closer than a brother, if you go to Him. Charles! try to love Him. As for what has passed between us this evening; remember this, that I dare not, and cannot, be the wife of any one who is not His servant."

"*I can never be His servant—without you,*" persisted Gough.

Her answer was a bold and fearless one, though it pained her to utter it.

"**YOU CAN NEVER BE MY HUSBAND—WITHOUT HIM.**"

"Then I may give it up in despair——oh!"

"Give nothing up, Charles, but your stubborn heart. If you will faithfully promise to try and love Him, I can as faithfully promise you Hope."

"Then I will try indeed," he cried.

"But not for my sake; for the sake of your soul."

"No—no—for *your* sake. Ada! *I love you better than my soul.*"

"Charles!"

She started back from him, as pale as marble, and with her hands to her temples, as though he had struck her. She could not speak for a long time, but remained watching him with a kind of horror,

as he sat with his knees doubled up, and his head buried in his hands upon them. At first her love for the poor headstrong sinner was nearly extinguished. She almost despised him for the daring sacrilegious words he had dared to utter. But her next feeling was one of deep pity and love for him. When she did speak at length, her voice was low and hoarse.

“ Oh if I had thought it would be so, poor brother, I should never—never have loved you as I do. Your soul ! Oh ! would you barter its eternal happiness, for a fading and unreal joy ? ” and before he guessed what she was doing, she had knelt down, and with his hand in her’s, prayed aloud in the clear evening air for the poor unhappy mortal she loved but too well. She implored for pardon for him, with a sweet simple eloquence that touched even his hard heart.’ She begged that this foolish love of his might not lead to the destruction of his soul, and that God would use His own means to change his heart. She did not seek to palliate his glaring offence one iota, but she blamed herself for it, in having told him she loved him, and then asked humbly for strength and wisdom, to act in all things according to the Supreme Will.

He never raised his head, or took his hands from his face all the time she was praying ; nor did he utter a single sob, or show any signs of being moved. Was it that his great love for her had

entirely absorbed a Higher and Worthier love ? or was it that he was so greatly moved, that he had not power to stir or speak ? Shall we judge him harshly ? God forbid ! we shall be judged ourselves—poor soul !—let us hope it was the latter.

Ada rose from her knees, and looked at her poor lover for a moment. Not a movement ; not a sound escaped him. He was still as the blocks and stones around.

The poor girl's face was pale and melancholy, as she gazed down at him ; then she wiped her brow calmly, with her little white handkerchief ; smoothed her glossy hair, and put on her hat.

" I will leave you now, Charles," she said, quietly, and with a deep sigh, " I will leave you alone with God. You must not think of me any more. Forget me ; and ask pardon yourself, for what you have said, and thought. God be with you," and this ministering angel walked quickly away towards the Camp.

He did not look up till she had gone some distance ; and oh !—what a face he had ! It was white, bloodless, and full of despair. He did not attempt to speak, but he looked after her, and gave a low moan of grief.

She had gone from him, and left him without a single earthly comforter or adviser. He felt almost in despair, and in his agony he cried aloud, " God be merciful to me !"

Then it seemed as though a ray of quiet peace had entered his perturbed bosom ; for the color gradually came back to his face, and he gave a gentle sigh of relief and resignation. He heard two shots fired in quick succession at some distance in the jungle ; but he never thought for a moment about *them*, as he sat carelessly and mechanically plucking the leaves off the little bushes near him. Then the darkness came on, and the whole Camp before him was wrapped in gloom, and two or three twinkling stars made their appearance.

As Nerton was walking home to the Camp, with a dreadful hatred and jealousy at work in his mind ; he passed near the little rising ground, and determined to go and almost worship the spot where she, whom he loved so strongly, had been seated. When he neared the little rock, he started back in amazement at seeing a large figure rise from the ground among the shrubs, and stride quickly and silently towards the Camp. He caught one glimpse of a pale, haggard, woe-begone face ; and hardly recognized in it, the generally cheerful features of his brother-Officer, Charles Gough.

The latter did not go to Mess that evening. He pleaded indisposition—and justly, for he was very sick at heart.

That night he read the XVth Chapter of Luke with tearful eyes, and a throbbing bosom, and then he tremblingly offered up a short voiceless prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

SHIKARRIES.

NEXT morning, Gough was awakened by hearing a number of highly discreditable oaths !

The first thing he saw, after having rubbed his eyes, was——Boots ; both human Boots and leather boots. Human Boots was evidently in a tremendous rage about leather boots ; one of which he held in his hand, while the other covered his right leg from the sole of his foot to his thigh.

Gough could not at first make out what on earth Smiley had done with himself, or rather with his leg, that it was swelled so monstrously ; for Boots' other leg was only encased in a pair of very tight——tights ; and was not one that a painter or sculptor would choose for a model. However by dint of craning out his neck to the right and left, and staring very hard, Gough managed to discover what the real state of things was, and then he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

This made Smiley come to the right about at once, and commence his grievances.

“ Now just look here,” cried he, piteously, “ I'll be hanged if the white ants hav'nt eaten one of my new boots all to pieces in one night ! It's too bad ! Confound it !——it ! ——it ! ——it,

&c.," and fast poured Smiley's torrent of execrations on this unfortunate *it*, whatever *it* meant.

"Do you call that a boot, you've dropped yourself into, Boots in Boot?" cried Gough, laughing, "it would be a better fit if you put both legs into it."

"Never mind my legs; they're as good as yours at any rate," returned Smiley, who was rather sore upon that subject.

"Not they, my dear fellow. You'll have to eat many a good pound of curry and rice before you can get understandings to equal mine," and Gough thrust out one of the understandings alluded to, and slapped it, as if to prove its solidity. "But there's no doubt about that boot being too big for you at any rate," he went on."

"Too big!" returned Boots, irate, "I should just think so. Goliath wouldn't feel easy in it, it is so big—I ordered a pair from Madras, bran-new; got them up from Bunder, and took them out for the first time to-day. One's destroyed by white ants, and the other's only fit for a giant. Blow it!—it!—it!—it!" Poor Smiley's pipe-stem of a leg was knocking about inside the huge leather-casing like a ramrod in a musket, while the boot he held in his hand was something like a cannon that had burst, and was torn to fragments. And there stood the unfortunate owner with a rueful countenance; turning it about in his hands; and consigning bootmakers, white ants, and *its* to perdition.

"Why are you figging yourself out like that?" asked Gough, when his merriment had somewhat subsided.

"Didn't you hear? why it was carried, *Nem. Con.* last night at Mess, that all those who were off duty should go out after big game together. *Shikarries*,* beaters, and all sorts of other things, have been ordered to be ready. You had better come too—turn out and don't be lazy."

One spring into the shape of the letter L, and another like L, and Gough was out of bed, and rushing to a cold douce-bath behind the *kanauts*† of the tent.

Swish—swish—swish—ish—ish—ish—went the chatty-fulls of clear cold water over his outer man, refreshing, and invigorating it for any amount of toil, while the already forgotten inner man of the heart was quite neglected.

His good intentions were scattered to the winds. There's a not over-pleasant place paved with them, however, some people say.

Meantime, Smiley had got out of his boot, and putting on a more suitable pair, had begun to dress himself quickly.

"I say, Gough!" he shouted after a little.

"Hullo!" Swish—shew—swish—sh.

"Don't come out with us, you know, if you can't spare time."

* Hunters.

† Canvass sides of a tent.

" Oh I've nothing particular to do to-day, Boots !"

" Oh yes you have—you've to make love you know !"

Swish—swish—splash—was all the remark Smiley received in answer to this grain of chaff. It was too bad, but it did Gough a good deal of good, for it suddenly brought vividly to his recollection all the important events of the preceding night, and he again resumed his good intentions.

" Gough !" shouted Smiley again.

" Hullo !"

" Do you think *she* can spare you for a day or so ?"

" Who's *she* ?"

" Oh come now ; just as if you didn't know—come, tell the truth—wont you feel very sad, leaving her side for the whole day ?"

Reader, I told you before that Gough was a quick-tempered fellow ; and now if you could have looked behind the kanaut, you would have seen his face redden, and his eyes brighten at Smiley's returning to the sore subject, but he clenched his teeth, to keep down an angry retort, and scrubbed himself savagely with his towel. The careless, heedless Boots whistled for a moment, and then went on.

" Which do you know best, now, Gough—Ecclesiastes, or the Psalms ?"

" Why do you ask ?"

"Oh I only heard she had been stuffing you with religious nonsense. All girls do try that game on, when they want to catch a fellow, and just humbug with him. They make a fellow think they're deuced fond of him, and then suddenly pump him about his religious ideas, and pretend he's not good enough for them. Oh Gough, my dear fellow," continued Smiley, assuming a paternally pompous tone of voice, "you just mark my words ; so sure as she has been trying the religious dodge over you, so sure will she say, that she wont have you, unless you're a Christian."

Gough wondered whether Smiley only guessed that she had been speaking seriously to him, or whether he knew it, and how. Then Boots' words, coupled with his own refusal the night before, made him dreadfully vexed and angry. He could restrain himself no longer. "What do you mean, Mr. Smiley, by speaking to me like that? You must be either an ass or a fool to do so. Are you dressed, you young whelp?"

"Come Gough ; come now, keep your temper ; you know I'll not stand abuse. You're a fool yourself to make so much of a girl that only means to jilt you."

"Leave my tent at once !" thundered Gough, "or I'll kick you out of it !"

Smiley only whistled.

"Are you going or not?"

"No ! not till I choose."

Out rushed Gough in his shirt, fiery with rage. One hand was on the lad's collar in a moment, and the other clutching lower down. He raised him from the ground, like a feather, and was going to fling him far out at the tent door. But he had not taken two strides, when, as he felt how light and delicate the little fellow was, he checked his wrath suddenly, and laid his burden gently on his bed.

"Smiley! Smiley! I wish to heaven you wouldn't be so cruel!" and Gough leaned up against the tent pole, with his hands over his face, and his big broad chest heaving with the excitement he was in. "I *do* love Miss Maurice, and I cannot stand your insults to her."

"Come, there's my hand then," said Smiley, jumping up, and holding it out, for he felt remorse at having grieved the sturdy fellow who could have punished him so much if he chose. "What a thundering strong duffer you are!—Gough you're a brick—a regular brick," and he went on shaking Gough's hand, as if he wished to pull his arm off.

Nerton's plans were nearly being frustrated.

"Go, Smiley, go," cried Gough, "you've vexed me greatly, and I can't speak to you about

it now—another time, there—let me alone for a while. I forgive you—get along.”

Smiley gave the hand, held out to him two or three admiring jerks, and did as he was bid.

When he was gone, Gough slipped noiselessly behind the kanauts of the tent, for he did not wish to be seen praying, and there he knelt down, but was silent. His heart was at work though, for all that.

As soon as he was dressed, he walked over to Colonel Maurice's tent to find out if he could be spared from attending Orderly Room. The old Colonel was a strict disciplinarian, and required everything relating to duty to go on regularly like clock-work round him. He shrugged his shoulders and twirled his fierce grey moustaches, when Gough requested him for leave. “I don't like depriving you of a jolly day in the jungles Gough—besides you haven't had a holiday for a long time—but who's to take your duty to-day when you're absent?”

“Well, I really don't know, Sir, as they're all going out I hear, except the Officer of the day.”

“That's Mr. Dillon, I think.”

“Yes, Colonel.”

“Very well! explain anything you have to do particularly to him, and if he agrees to take your duty, you may go. I hope you'll have a pleasant day—Good morning!” Dillon was perfectly wil-

ling to comply with Gough's request, for he was a smart Officer, and reconciled himself to a dull day in the Camp with the best grace possible.

Round the Mess-tent were congregated a formidable array of villagers to act as beaters to the hunting party ; and seated amongst these, with no slight expressions of importance on their brown visages, were three Shikarries, two of whom were hired for the day. The tallest was a Musselmaun, called Shaik Chand, who carried a very dangerous-looking match-lock, the barrel of which was merely lashed to the stock with small strips of rattan. This worthy had all the usual appendages of the Shikarri hanging about him, powder horns and leather pouches, small cartridge boxes covered with bright colored tassels, and the coil of coir rope which acted as his fuse. The other two Shikarries were Hindoos; one of them Harris' favorite man, "Timmah," before spoken of. He was a weazened dried up little atomy ; but was nevertheless crammed full of dexterity and experience in his dangerous calling. Anamauriah was the name of the other, but he was facetiously called Anna Maria by his patrons of the chase. He was a young, smart-looking man, somewhat looked down upon by Shaik Chand and Timmah as a raw hand, but nevertheless he possessed an excellent knowledge of the different branches of his line of life.

The firing party were all seated in the Mess-tent

discussing huge cups of tea or coffee, with fresh-made rolls, eggs and butter, and the probabilities of success for the day. The conversation indeed was entirely confined to shooting subjects. Some were at variance regarding the difference between a panther and a cheetah, others were descanting upon the praises of their guns and gun-makers, while one drew the long-bow considerably in his stories of snipe-shooting in Burmah; where (he declared that) musquitoes were so large, that they had often been shot in mistake for snipe. "Our Doctor" continued the *archer*, "brought in six brace of splendid musquitoes, and sent them over to mess to be cooked for dinner—bye the bye, the poor man was short-sighted, however the mess-cook was not so, and didn't roast 'em." There were older men too who told more truthful tales of venery, replete with useful hints to the tyro. The mess-servants were busy putting up provisions in numerous *cavady* baskets, to be slung from a bamboo, balanced on a cooly's shoulder. There was cold beef and lamb, with a bottle of Europe pickles; and two village fowls, that had no doubt been, the day before, the patriarchs of their tribes. Then there were tins of sardines; herrings and sausages; and a couple of boiled tongues; while the liquor baskets contained Bass' and Tennant's India Ale, Old Tom, Brandy and Soda-water *ad libitum*; and though the half-starved looking coolies uttered

or other, O'Rourk was particularly attached to Gough, and Gough to O'Rourk—but if either had been asked to state any of the grounds of his attachment, he could not have named one. There was a tie of friendship between them which only death could sever. They confided faithfully and candidly in each other, but why they did so, they could not tell; and at length, by a sort of mutual and tacit agreement, Gough was always addressed by O'Rourk when alone, as Dowd, a contraction of the Musselmaun name for Daood or David, while the other was invariably spoken to by Gough, but never in the presence of others as Jonathan.

“Jonathan, old fellow, that liquor's playing the deuce with you. I wish I could get you to giveit up.”

“Never mind that, Dowd—I can't help it—I know you speak to me, because you mean it. And it's right good o'you too—but how have you got on with *her*? I saw you go out walking with her yesterday evening, you sly dog, you.”

“Aye, indeed,” replied Gough, with a sigh. “And do you know Jonathan, she spoke to me of you?”

O'Rourk gave his head a little toss—“About my drinking, of course.”

“Yes, and she's very sorry for you, old fellow.”

“Hang it—I can't help that, Dowd. I tell you I'd give it up if I could, but I can't; its impossible—I'd die if I didn't take a drop or two now and again. Perhaps I *do* take a *leetle* too much—but I

don't make a beast of myself anyway—a little at a time is no harm at all. Faith, I'd like a taste now."

"Don't touch it then, my boy—it's poison to you—see how the effects of it, have fagged you before any of us. Ah, Jonathan, old chum," continued Gough, slapping him on the back—"I *do* wish you'd try, and give it up."

"Sure, and I'm trying ivery day."

"And yet you go on drinking a drop or two here and there every day—it's that, that is killing you. I wish to heaven I could stop you. I'd smash every bottle of liquor I found near you, if I thought it could stop you—but I know it wouldn't; you'd get more somewhere else. If you'd only heard how Miss Maurice spoke to me last night, Jonathan, you'd have fairly cried—Ah she is a good girl, sterling good."

"To be sure, she is—I know that, for certain—and you're a very lucky fellow if you get her for your wife, but there's no doubt about it, man, for I know she is mortal fond of you—why don't you pop Dowd?"

"I did, Jonathan, I did," said Gough, in such a tone of sadness, that O'Rourk looked up at him with a face full of comical wonder.

"Well! and she" ——— ?

"Wont have anything to say to me."

"Nonsense, I don't believe it."

"It's a fact—heigho."

"Well upon my conscience, that's a mortal shame—but I don't believe a word of it—I know she likes you, man. Dowd, old fellow—tell the truth—you're joking."

"No, I'm not, my dear fellow"—replied Gough, sadly, "I'm just telling you the plain unvarnished truth—she says she does—well, like me a little bit, but she won't marry me, because—now don't laugh or get into a rage, Jonathan—because I—I'm not a—a—Christian."

O'Rourke stopped in his walk, and hit his thigh a tremendous slap with the palm of his hand, at the same time puckering up his mouth, and giving an expressive whistle.

"Christian indeed ! well, by all the goats in Kerry I thought she had more sense—why, you're the best fellow going—does she think yer a Turk or a haythen ?"

Gough walked silently on. How differently this little man thought from Miss Maurice. He was destroying his body with slow poison—and hurrying his uncared-for soul to anywhere—'twas nothing to him where his soul went. He never once thought of that.

"Christian !" continued O'Rourke, contemptuously. "Well I *did* think she had more sense—I knew she was religious—but I had no idea that she had gone *clane* mad about it—I've known some very foolish women, but of all the"—

“Jonathan—Jonathan don’t, like a good fellow—don’t say a word against her—I cant stand it.”

“What does she mane by it, then?”

“Simply, that she cannot marry one, whose heart is not right with God.”

It was now O’Rourk’s turn to be silent. A new light had broken in upon him—“Christian” was to him a synonymous term with “civilized.” In his wide view of religion every man was a Christian, who did not bow down to a block of stone like a heathen. But indeed our little Irishman had hardly ever thought of religion at all. Since he had been in the service, and that was some eight years, he had never once entered a Church—never having been ordered to do so. He thought a pious man a very good sort of fellow, provided he didn’t try to make every one as miserable as he evidently was himself, but the idea of a man’s heart being *right* or *wrong with God*, never entered his head, and he didn’t half understand it. “I don’t know what you mane Dowd by a man whose heart isn’t right with God—but I know this much, that there’s not a decenter fellow than yourself anywhere. Och man, she’s only trying you a bit—that’s all, depind upon it.”

“Not a bit of it—no indeed—Jonathan my lad, I can’t hide it from myself that I am living without God in the world, and so are you.”

“But God is not in the world.”

"I don't agree with you there," replied Gough thoughtfully. "He's with Miss Maurice I know, and she's in the world."

"Well Dowd you may talk as you like. I'm not a religious man—but all I say is, that it's a thundering shame of that girl refusing you—knowing you were in love with her ; there's no religion in the world can prevent two that love each other from lawfully marrying, and I'll spake to her myself about it, so I will. Sure there's no one in the world so well able to make a man a Christian, as she calls it, as a good wife. Besides you are a Christian and a very dacent one too—you go to Church regularly, and you don't curse and swear, and keep bad company or destroy yourself with drink, like—like me—what more can she want ? Faith she's hard to please."

"Now don't get angry with her, Jonathan—she's the kindest and best-hearted girl in the world—I haven't a particle of doubt but that she did it all for the best."

"All for the worst you mane—why many a man would take to drink, to drown his care, after such a refusal—I know I'd have to drink like a fish to keep my spirits up. Wouldn't she have what she has done on her conscience then ? Oh, thunder and turf, I'm intirely decaved in that girl, Dowd—to say the laste of it, it's mortial uncivil of her, and you so fond of her too—Christian ! pah, any man

can be a Christian without pulling long faces and singing psalms all day—I'll spake my mind to her."

"No, you wont, Jonathan."

"I tell you I will now."

"You had much better not—you'll only be hurting her feelings. The business is over now, and its better to try and let it drop—though I'll never cease to love her, and long for her, I know—you wont speak of it to her, Jonathan."

"I'll take my *davy* I shall."

The conversation ended here for the present, for the two Officers perceived that the party in advance had halted, and were attentively looking down at something on the hot sand of the nullah, or water-course, up which they had been walking. Dowd and Jonathan soon joined them—there imprinted on the sand, and as large as a good-sized breakfast saucer, was the foot-step, or paw-step of the king of the Indian jungles—a Royal tiger.

"Is it fresh, Timmah?" asked six eager voices.

The withered little atomy immediately crouched down on his hams; gazed scrutinizingly at the *pug*, and then began gently scraping the sand off the edges of it with his fore-finger. The result of this examination was a curious jumble of broken English and vile Hindostanee. "Tiga, half 'nour done gone—* *maloom ni*—wan—two—ishikish mile gone, *maloom ni*—got—never got—plenty soon

* Dont know.

seeing. Wah !* *burra chore—tu kubber dar !*" And now followed the excitement of posting the sportsmen. The Shikarries, by a kind of instinct of their own, were certain that puss could not be very far off—in fact they seemed to hunt by the nose like a Harrier. The place to them smelt tigerish, so they at once began making their arrangements. The whole party were standing in a broad, dry nullah, which in the rainy season was full to overflowing, but down the centre of which, there now sluggishly flowed a thin, shallow stream of muddy lukewarm water. The banks on either side were thickly covered with arbutus, daturas, and strichnine bushes, with here and there a few large tulip, and banyan, trees towering in state over them. It was therefore decided that the firing party should form a line vertical to the nullah, and extending some two hundred yards into the jungles on either side of it, while the beaters, making a long detour, should beat down the river towards them. No sooner was this plan determined upon, than acted upon. The sportsmen noiselessly extended, and took up their positions—some among the gnarled branches, pink flowers, and nipping red ants peculiar to the tulip tree—and others, who placed much confidence in their nerve and correctness of aim, on *terra firma*—each one, however, taking care to have within sight, or at least know the exact

* Big thief, you take care.

position of, his next door neighbour. Then followed about half an hour of perfect silence, broken occasionally by the scream of a suspicious peacock or distressed partridge—who no doubt had an idea that *something* was up, but presently when the beaters began to advance, the whole jungle before so quiet, and undisturbed, became a sort of pandemonium of terribly unearthly noises, in which the voice of the peacock or partridge could no more be heard, than could the pop of a soda-water cork, beside the discharge of an eight-inch brass howitzer. The chorus of screams, yells, roars, drummings, screeches, and howlings gradually drew nearer and nearer, and seemed to strike terror into the hearts of the poor denizens of the jungle, who fled distractedly before them—and it was wonderful how soon that well stocked piece of jungle-land became emptied of its inhabitants. A hyena, a huge, unwieldy, dirty, ill-natured-looking brute, trotted away down the nullah with the coarse bristles of his back erect with rage, and snarling, and growling at being roused up out of his comfortable bed, when he had just turned in for the day. Dozens of jackals scampered out of the bushes on the banks, and into them again in much trepidation of mind. A sulky, shaggy old bear; who looked as if he was still half asleep, and as if his head was too heavy for his shoulders, came ambling along evidently with a dignity

offended, at having been ordered to quit the premises. Smiley, who was mounted on a bear-fruit tree on the left bank of the nullah, was in an excellent position to command a view of most of the fugitives—and when he saw old Bruin, he could hardly resist the temptation to let fly at him. But he noticed Gough, who was on foot on the other bank with his pattern-man, Shaik Rustum, shake his hand energetically to warn him not to do so, so poor Boots dropped his rifle, and heaved a sigh. Then came a few light agile antelopes—bounding and skipping along, as though they were merely playing leap-frog over the bushes—but they disappeared again like flashes of lightning. A few motherly old monkeys with their progeny clinging fondly all over them, and followed by their very red-faced, savage-looking husbands, stalked out of the lower bushes, and with trepidation marked on every line of their visages made for the larger trees, and commenced hopping up them. A fierce-looking old dame with a family of three, preceded by a patriarch that looked like a ruffian, made for the tree on which Smiley sat, not perceiving that it was already occupied. They made the discovery, however, when they had gone too far to retreat, and leave him in undisturbed possession; so the husband merely sheering off to the furthest bough—danced, and hopped, and growled at poor Boots, making

hideous faces at him—to try and frighten him off. But Boots was too intent on the anticipated game, and kept as the Yankees say, “his eye skinned,” and roaming over the space in front.

His vigilance was at length rewarded—for, after having traced, moving gradually towards him, a shaking of the tops of the long grass in front—he saw a yellow head, with short ears and massive jaws come forth ; then a muscular neck, a long lithe body with the well known black stripes, deeply marked against the tawny hide, then the tail swinging to and fro, gently and leisurely, and Boots’ ardent wish for the first time was gratified—for there, before his eyes, stood within easy shot of him, the terror of the jungles, the Royal Indian Tiger.

There being a tall thick clump of *jurr*-berry trees, some ten yards in front of Gough, the magnificent animal beyond them was of course totally undiscernable by him ; but nevertheless, when Shaik Rustum had warned him that Smiley Sahib was making frantic signs, he at once kept his rifle ready to raise to his shoulder in a twinkling, and became all eyes and ears. The sight that Smiley saw for a few moments from his perch was one that generally makes the heart go pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, when seen as he saw it. It was a noble animal—a full-grown male tiger of enormous size, and strength, but not of the bright yellow color with

jet black stripes, which Master Smiley and his nursery-maids had observed on animals of the same species in Regent's Park. The entire brute appeared much coarser, dirtier, and larger than the few he had seen. When it issued from the long grass into the open patch of ground, just behind the bushes that hid it from Gough, it stopped and began in a most careless domestic manner to lick its brawny sides, which had no doubt been tickled by contact with the shrubs around; then it majestically raised its head, and looking back towards the line of beaters, whose heads were appearing here and there, showed a white, but unpleasant, set of fangs, and gave vent to a deep sepulchral roar. The nearest beater heard, and that one sound was enough for Ramswamy's nerves. With a shriek of terror he darted away yelling *Pedda pullee! PEDDA PULLEE! and the very air was rent for the next few seconds, with horrible cries, as each valiant beater fled screaming from the spot. Poor Boots shook in his boots, but we must do him the credit to say it was not from fear, but from excitement, and his rifle trembled in his grasp as he glanced along the barrel, and aimed at a black stripe between the eyes of the tiger.

Bang—bang. The second bang proceeded from Smiley's weapon; the bullet tore up the sand at the tiger's foot and passed harmlessly onward,

* Telegoo for Tiger, literally a "big cat."

whizzing by the ear of a fleeing native.—Not so the result of the first bang ; thud—true to its mark, Nerton's leaden messenger entered like a flash of lightning behind the left shoulder of the man-eater and then with a roar of rage, the beautiful brute leaped forward some four feet, right into the bushes in front. Gough heard the crash of branches and leaves, and held his breath in excitement. Swish ! the foliage flew right and left in a moment—the fierce head appeared again, and the flashing eyes caught a sudden glimpse of a tall firm white man, with a double-barrelled rifle held steadily at his shoulder.

Two seconds more, and a conical lump of lead, weighing fully two ounces, entered at the open mouth, tore away part of the lower jaw, and passed into the chest of the advancing animal, ploughing through flesh and muscle, and shattering teeth and bones into splinters. But this ugly wound did not at once put a stop to the energy of the life-tenacious brute, it only cut short the terrific roar it had begun. Though terribly lamed by the wound behind the shoulder, it managed to give an enormous leap of about five feet high and twelve feet long, while the out-stretched paw of the right fore-leg described a segment of a circle—thus.



"But it doesn't matter;" resumed the tall pale face, with great complacency—"I'll not swear I hit the brute; but I think I did—however, he belongs to Gough undoubtedly; he brought him down."

"Thank you," said Gough, quietly, "he brought me down."

"You're very kind, I'm sure, Nerton," said Boots, in great wrath, "giving away what doesn't belong to you so generously. If it hadn't been for my hitting him, he'd have had Gough's life."

"Thin why didn't ye hit him dacently whin ye wor about it, ye baby?"—cried O'Rourk. "Ye made the brute mad, that was all ye did, faith."

Smiley swelled with indignation.

"What do you know about it, Sir—I dare say *you* took care to be well out of his way at any rate. But I shant be bullied out of my rights I can tell you."

"Oh there! there! shut up Smiley," said Gough; "you haven't the slightest right to him; but you may take him with pleasure, and send the skin home to your mater; with an account of the gallant way you killed him."

"You'll figure in the county papers, no doubt, Boots," said Hillier.

"Oh of course," added Cocky, "and I'll back the valiant Saint George to marry a princess."

"Boots, the Tiger slayer, would look well on a title page," chaffed another.

"Bragging Boots! would be more appropriate," roared O'Rourk; "why he hasn't a scratch, and here's this poor fellow bleeding like a lawyer's client." It was true! while they were all chaffing Smiley, the blood was flowing from beneath Gough's coat cuff, and forming a little pool of blood beside him.

He looked down at his hand, and then grasped his right arm—"Aye, indeed, I believe I am hurt," said he.

It wasn't long before he was pulled out of his coat, and his arm examined. There was a deep gaping gash in the fleshy part of his arm above the elbow, while the blood was flowing in shooting streams from the severed veins. It was an ugly wound to look at, but, to a Doctor's eyes, would have been a *nice clean* one—no ragged edges, &c. Harris and Hillier commenced tying his arm higher up with a handkerchief, while Old Danniels went to look for cobwebs, of which there were plenty on the surrounding bushes, to help to stanch the bleeding.

"This is an odd wound for a Tiger to give, Cocky," remarked Hillier.

"That it is—I don't understand it; the brute's claws make an ugly tear, and his teeth can't possibly cut like a carving knife."

"There! there's no use talking of it," said the

sufferer gently. "It'll heal, I dare say in a day or two."

"By the powers !" ejaculated O'Rourk, who had been quietly examining Gough's coat.

"What's that ?" asked Nerton, hastily.

"OH YOU DUFFERS ! no tiger on airth could have done this—just see if you have not gone and cut him with your knives—here's his coat cut as clean as if it had been done with a razor."

"I'm sure I—really—well, its too bad"—stammered Nerton—"it must have been Rustum."

"Ni sahib," said the Sepoy, sharply ; that's not from my knife—mine's two-edged."

"OH YOU DUFFERS !" roared O'Rourk, wrathfully. "I'm very sorry, Gough—really" said Nerton, "very, but I—I don't think I did it—I'm generally more careful. In fact I'm sure it wasn't I that did it."

"It's just one or other of you" said Hillier, quietly.

"I'll bet it was Rustum," said Cocky, "these niggers always make such mulls of every-thing."

"Ni sahib," repeated Rustum, pertinaciously ; my knife is two-edged and sharp pointed—it would have pierced, not cut. Nerton Sahib's knife is single-edged." And the sharp native looked as if he had clenched the argument.

"Oh it doesn't matter now," put in our hero—"accidents will happen you know."

"I'm very sorry, old fellow ;" said Nerton, "but you must not blame me ; I don't think I'm such a muff—bye the bye. You might have done it yourself."

"I don't blame you,—but I'm not left-handed, and the thing's on my right arm you see."

"THE UNMITIGATED DUFFERS!" yelled the Irishman.

"Never mind now Joney" said Gough, "it's all over, let's have something to drink—I'm thirsty."

"I vote we tiff," sung out Hillier ; "and drink Gough's health in* *simkin*!"

The proposition was gladly accepted. The caddy coolies were shouted at, and brought up. The hampers were disgorged of their contents ; plates, knives, and forks were quickly laid, and a preparatory glass of sherry handed round. Then seats were taken, and amidst roars of merriment and chaff, champaign corks were shot away, and beer corks carefully drawn ; fowls cut into smithereens, as O'Rourk expressed it, and the tempting recesses of cold pie explored.

"Fill your glasses, gentlemen!" said Cocky, getting on his knees—"Here's to the health of our jolly good Adjutant ; may he always scrape clear of mishaps as he did to-day—and not meet his end either by paw of tiger, or misguided knife of friend."
"Hurrah !" yelled everybody.—Strange, that not

* Champagne.

one of them thought then of an Omniscient—Omni-present God—or felt that any gratitude was due to Him for the life thus spared.

“I propose an amendment,” said Smiley, rising, but not daring to meet Gough’s eye, who guessed what was coming. “May our friend the Adjutant meet with success in his little *affaire d’amour*. And in due time the lady we all wot of become the fair Mrs. Gough.”

Gough’s eye flashed—and he was going to remark upon Smiley’s impertinence—when Cocky raised his knife—and said—

“Hold hard there—silence—hush—sh—sh—”

CHAPTER VII.

THE JUNGLE VISITOR.

“HUSH—sh—sh !”

Clatter, clatter; chat, chat went on the plates, knives, forks, and tongues.

“Hush—sh !”—repeated Cocky, louder than ever.

Every body looked up at the disturber of the even tenor of their feeding way, who was pointing silently in a certain direction with his fork.

Heads were turned that way. Nothing could be seen, but as they were all quiet, something was heard.

In clear loud thrilling tones, some unseen person was singing, and the words the listeners heard were these.

“———— and slow to wrath,

“ In mercy plenteous.

“ He will not chide continually,

“ Nor keep his anger still.

“ With us He dealt not as we sinn'd,

“ Nor did requite our ill.”

“ Bravo !” said Cocky, *sotto voce*.

“ Encore ! encore ! give us another stave,” added Hillier.

“ Who can it be ?” asked O'Rourk, with a wondering face, and a capon's drumstick in his hand, halted on the way to his mouth.

"Hush--sh! listen again," said Gough.

"For as the heaven, in its height

"The earth surmounteth far :

"So great to those that do Him fear

"His tender mercies are :

"As far as east is distant from

"The west, so far hath He

"From us removed, in His love,

"All our iniquity."

"Hang it, it's a psalm!"

"Very good psalm, and very well sung."

"Grammar's only middling though."

"Splendid voice."

"Who--can--it be?"

"None of our fellows."

"In the middle of the jungle too."

"Some demented padre, no doubt."

"Hush--hark--he's at it again!"

Remarked our merry
Sportsmen, the one to the
other.

The sweet thrilling voice now swelled louder, and in more spirit-stirring tones. It seemed as though it were passing along some distance beyond the other bank of the nullah.

"Such pity as a father hath

"Unto His children dear ;

"Like pity shows the Lord to such

"As worship Him in fear.

"For He remembers we are dust,

"And He our frame well knows,

"Frail man ; his days are like the grass,

"As flow'r in field he grows."

"That's true enough old fellow, life's short," remarked Hillier.

"I'll back him to preach a tip top sermon whoever he is," said Cocky.

"I wish we could all sing that, Joney" said Gough to his neighbour O'Rourk. "I wish in my heart we could sing it with so much confidence."

"Well," replied the other, "perhaps we *shall* some day ; but never mind, I think the sweet songster's mad who ever he is. There, he's at it again. Hush!"

"For over it the wind doth pass,

"And it away is gone ;

"And of the place——

At this point the voice became lost, as the singer evidently passed along out of hearing behind some large granite rocks.

"That was'nt bad at all for the wild jungles ; was it now?" asked Cocky.

"First rate," replied Hillier.

"Who the deuce can it be?" asked old Daniels.

"Let's send some one, and find out," suggested Gough.

"Here Rustum," (in Hindostanee), "run along quick, and see what Sahib that is singing over yonder : if he's a pukka Sahib ask him, with our salaam, to come and take tiffin."

Rustum had been sitting on his hams watching the man-eater denuded of his skin, but at Gough's words he sprang up and darted away, followed by the Drummer Bagshot, who had been regaling sumptuously on the body of a fowl, which O'Rourke had given him. He did not drop his tiffin though, notwithstanding the interruption, but was off at a run through the trees picking it as he went along. Bagshot was inquisitive; very much so, and he now felt a longing desire to know who the owner of the sweet voice was; so he did his best to pass Rustum, more especially as he heard his patron O'Rourke shout after him. "Bravo Shotbag--go it; I'll give ye a Rupee if ye beat Rustum."

Away then, the two went; Rustum the lightest running swiftly with a gliding motion, and carefully, as though he were picking his way among eggs, for his feet were bare, and thorns were numerous and large. Bagshot on the other hand sprawled along, swinging his lanky arms and legs about in a reckless manner. Of course they were soon out of sight of the party, as they dashed across the nullah and plunged into the jungle beyond. Rustum was easily keeping ahead, treading gingerly as before stated, when he suddenly stopped with a gesture of pain; but in the manner peculiar to natives of India, he balanced himself on one foot, and raising the other by bending his knee, proceeded to pick out the disturbing

thorn. With a shout of exultation Bagshot darted past him, and headed him considerably; but in his impetuous career he was suddenly brought to a dead stop, by running full tilt against the waistcoat of a tall gentleman who unexpectedly stepped in his way. The shock threw Bagshot breathless on the grass, and knocked off the stranger's steeple crowned felt hat. Now the sun was glaring down from the heavens making every thing beneath it very hot; so the stranger after rubbing his waistcoat and his elbow, felt that his head had better be covered, and began looking for his hat; but being evidently short-sighted, was rather puzzled in his search. He was a tall, fine looking, gentlemanly man, apparently of about 30 years of age. His face, on which not the slightest sign of moustache or whisker showed itself, was peculiarly pleasant and handsome. He had large, dark, expressive eyes, which to the acute observer showed each feeling as it worked in the mind of their owner; but it was the look of deep settled love and benevolence shining out in his entire features, and a noble fearless and frank air about the whole man, that won for him at first sight the good opinion of those who met him. Rustum's first prolonged stare satisfied him at once as to the stranger's being a "pukka Sahib;" and so he ran to him, and picking up his hat, presented it with a deferential salaam.

"Thanks, thanks my friend," said the stranger.
"Can you speak English?"

"No, Sahib," replied the sepoy.

"You seem to understand me, however," said the tall one, with a pleasant smile, "but who may you be my man?" Rustum, who merely guessed what the question was, answered incoherently, that he was* "*Pitchpot pultun sepoy.*"

The stranger was much puzzled, and stared at Rustum after the manner of short-sighted persons.

"Pitchpot—what? well really my man I don't understand you; *malloom ni*, you know: but I've dropped my spectacles—my glasses; and am as blind as a bat without them."

This was of course, to Rustum, perfectly incomprehensible, so he looked around for Bagshot to help him out of his difficulty by interpreting; but that worthy lay on his back a few yards off, groaning dismally, oblivious to everything around him.

"I see you don't understand me," continued the stranger. "It's my glasses, you know—glasses to see with," and he went through the operation of putting on spectacles in pantomime. "Eyes, no good—very bad—can't see. [^]Glasses dropped somewhere."

The quick-witted native comprehended now; and after shaking his head sideways to signify that

* A sepoy of Fitzpatrick's Regiment.

he did so, commenced searching among the grass around.

Meanwhile Bagshot was sitting up, and ceasing to groan, had commenced kneading his head all over with his hands, and to stare vacantly at the tall stranger. While he kneaded away, his fingers came in contact with a bit of wire entangled in his back hair. He pulled at it, and lo ! there appeared the spectacles. He gazed at them awkwardly for a moment, and then said dreamily, holding them out, "Here's them things—the gen'l'm's specks, Rustum—oh hokey ! my 'ead—it rattles like my drum when I'm beating a tattoo on't."

"Who's that?" asked the tall stranger of Rustum, after having adjusted his spectacles, and taken a long look at the queer-looking Bagshot.

"*Drumer, Pitchpot pultun,*" replied the sepoy. The stranger smiled and beamed gratefully on Rustum through his glasses, as though he had received the information asked for, taking a mental picture of him as he did so.

"*Sahib ka ism shereef kya hi ?*"* asked Rustum with folded arms.

"I dont know what you're saying, my man ; I don't indeed. I'm a stranger—quite new to India. I *malloom ni*, what you say."

"Sir, he wants to know who yer honour is, Sir?" said the Drummer, in a hoarse voice.

* "What is the Sahib's respected name?"

“ Ah ! you can speak English I find ; are you hurt ? It was you whom ran up against me, I believe. Allow me to give you my hand.”

“ My 'ead's got a hawful 'ard knock yer honour—I beg yer honour's pardon, for runnin up agin yer honour's body like that ; but Mr. Gough sent me flying to see who yer honour was, singin so beautiful, beggin yer honour's pardon. That Muss'lman chap and me came along yer honour ; and I didn't see yer Sir, no truly Sir, till I jist come one dig right agin yer honour's wiskot, beggin yer honour's pardon.”

“ Tut, tut, my fine fellow ! that's three times you've begged my pardon for nothing at all,” returned the stranger, in a pleasant tone ; “ 'twas entirely a mutual mistake, my lad, but what's this you're telling me ? who's Mr. Gough ?”

“ He's thagetint, Sir.”

“ The what ?”

“ Adjutin Sir, rigimental adjutin.”

“ Oh the Adjutant, I see—I see ; but surely you don't tell me that your's is the Regiment now on the march to Sandybad.”

“ Yis, yer honour ; Fitzpatrick's rigiment—Con-dapilly rangers. We're haltin at Rajooloopettah, and the hofficers is all out shootin yer honour. Mr. Gough sent his salaam to yer honour to come and take tiffin with the genl'ms. A fine tiffin it is too, yer honour ; plenty of meat and drink, and

lots of everythin," and here the Drummer seemed suddenly to have recollected the carcass of the fowl he had been carrying, and instituted a search for it immediately.

"What is your name, my friend?" asked the stranger, who was intently watching the Drummer poking among the dried leaves and grass.

The latter immediately stood at attention, made a salute, and answered with military precision, and all in a breath, "Antony Bagshot, Regimental num'er twenty-two, Grenadier Comp'ny, but Mr. O'Rook calls me Shotbag," and he proceeded to continue his search.

The stranger laughed heartily both at the Drummer's ludicrous manner, and the alleged inversion of his name; and, when Bagshot found the fowl, and commenced clearing it of dust, etcetra, etcetra, he laughed still more heartily.

"'Tis n't wery often us poor chaps in the drums gits big fowls to eat for dinner, beggin your honour's pardon," began Bagshot, apologetically.

"Why, what do you generally eat?" asked the stranger.

"Why when we gits pay, and has a little money, yer honour, we eats mutton curry and rice, and when we hasn't got no pice, we eats pepper water and rice."

"And when did you eat last, Shotbag?"

"Afore we left camp yer honour."

"I have not eaten a single morsel now, since

five o'clock the evening before last ; what do you think of that ?" said the pleasant-looking stranger, merrily.

Bagshot opened his eyes and mouth, and stared, " Oh laws ! why yer honour must be starvin. The genl'ms down in the 'ollow there by the nullah, will yer honour come now, and sit down with them—ye'll get lashins to eat in a minute beggin your honour's pardon."

" Oh my friend," said the stranger, laying his large white hand on the Drummer's bony shoulder, while his tone changed into a grave one ; " none of us I fear are ever half grateful to our Father for His wondrous kindness to such mortals as we are. I have been, for three days and nights, wandering in these jungles, and was often almost in despair—for I thought I should never have left them alive—but I have done wrong—I have doubted the tenderness of my God. I have doubted that ' my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' Has He not said, ' Fear not, for I am with thee,' Yes my friend, He has mercifully preserved me ; and I must bend the knee, and offer Him my heartfelt thanksgiving. Will you go back to the party, and tell them that the Revd. Allan Huntly will be happy to join them in a moment."

Bagshot stared a little, as though he did not quite understand the stranger's words. He was a Romanist, and had seldom during his life heard

words like these in a chance conversation—words so startling, so palpably true, and so heart stirring. They touched this simple honest heart at any rate; a great round tear rolled down his cheek, and as he brushed it away with the back of his brown hard hand, he blurted out—

“ I wish to my heart I could trust in the Lord God Almighty like that, yer honour. But I aint got no good in me at all,” and with a sigh, he added, “ All right Sir, I’ll tell Rustum to let the genl’ms know yer comin, and I’ll wait myself a bit off for you.”

The Clergyman looked silently and sadly after the lad as he walked away. Then he reverently knelt down beneath the shade of a tree, and baring his head, offered up a thank offering of a humble contrite heart acceptable to the Almighty. In that prayer, did he revert to the poor Drummer, who had expressed a wish to trust in his God? We feel confident he did.

The party at tiffin were indulging in various surmises as to who was the big tall Sahib, Rustum had described to them; and when O’Rourk had declared he was certain he was a “ Padre Sahib,” and Cocky had offered to bet two to one, he was a missionary—the subject of their conjectures appeared, crossing the nullah in company with Bagshot.

Gough at once rose, and went to meet him, with

his right arm slung in a large red silk handkerchief of Danniels. There was a look of such deep delight, and noble candour in the stranger's face, and his entire air and bearing were so gentlemanly, so utterly devoid of affectation, that our hero advanced, perfectly assured, and shook his hand with every confidence. "Mr. Gough I presume," began the stranger, and on the other replying by a slight bow he went on. "I am Allan Huntly, lately appointed Scotch Chaplain at Sandybad on my way to join."

"Delighted to see you indeed, Mr. Huntly," replied the young man. "We are just enjoying a little tiffin after our sport—and not a bad bag either," he added, pointing with pardonable pride to the half flayed carcase of the tiger.

"Ah I see," returned the Clergyman—"indeed! a tiger; but your arm is bound, have you been injured?"

"Oh yes, very slightly, but come along Sir; I'll introduce you; make yourself at home. I'm sure you must have an appetite if you have walked as we have from Rajooloopettah."

"Well I *am* rather hungry," replied Mr. Huntly, shrugging his shoulders; but as they had now reached the group of sportsmen, the introduction took place at once, "Captain Danniels, Captain Nerton, Mr. Hillier, Mr. Harris, Mr. O'Bourk, Mr. Smiley. Gentlemen, the Reverend Allan Huntly, like us, bound for Sandybad."

Many hearty expressions of welcome and good feeling greeted the new found guest, as he quietly took his place on the grass between Captain Danniels and our hero, while various dishes were placed near his plate, and he was requested on all sides to help himself.

Mr. Huntly said grace for himself, and commenced his tiffin.

"You have not come out for sport to-day Mr. Huntly, I presume," said Captain Danniels, "you hadn't a gun with you I remarked."

"Dear me, no Sir, I have hardly ever fired a shot in my life. I can assure you, my wandering thus in the jungles was entirely unintentional, particularly as I've been in them without food and shelter for three nights and days."

Exclamations of surprise and condolence of course followed this announcement, and everybody wished to know how he had become so unfortunate.

"Why the fact is," replied the Clergyman, "that I've been robbed on my journey up from Bunder. When I arrived in Madras, and found I was appointed to Sandybad, I engaged a servant to accompany me on my journey. A few days ago at a place called Nundigaum, I believe, this wretch took everything I had, and disappeared, leaving me without a Rupee."

"But were you not dawking up?" asked Gough.

"No ; I found, on arrival at Bunder, that I could not procure a daw for some reason or other ; and

the consequence was, I made up my mind to ride up by stages on a pony. I had heard that a regiment was on the march some stages in advance, so I made forced marches hoping to overtake you."

"Wasn't it lucky we halted to-day!" cried Cocky.

"It was really most Providential for *me*," replied Mr. Huntly, "and I feel very thankful to the Almighty for having ordered it so. I assure you gentlemen, my last three nights have been spent in no very pleasant frame of mind."

"I should rather think not," remarked Nerton; "why my dear Sir, had that man-eating brute yonder happened to have crossed your path, you would never have seen the light of another day."

"Ah, you are about right Sir; that was another danger I have cause to thank my God for having preserved me from."

"But how on earth did you mean to reach Sandybad without the necessary funds, Mr. Huntly?" asked another.

"I had hoped to have overtaken your Regiment, and thrown myself on your hospitality, gentlemen. From the moment I discovered that I had been hopelessly robbed, from my Pony and baggage to my last Anna, I took my packet of biscuits and a bottle of water, and hastened on a foot-marching for the greater part at night. I very naturally lost my way as it was pitch dark, and wandered, I suppose by a bye-path, into the jungle where I've been ever since."

"You have had a great escape, certainly!" remarked Gough.

"A most wonderful one indeed—one that I shall ever be most grateful to God for. I feel inclined to say, like David," continued the Clergyman, with a burst of genuine feeling, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me."

"Pah!" ejaculated Hillier, who had always gained credit for being very outspoken. "There are not very many benefits in being robbed by a rascally servant, and then lost for some days in the jungles."

"Sir," returned Mr. Huntly, quietly but firmly, "I was alluding to my escape; and I thank God for it; but as to your remark, though it appears reasonable, you must, I think, admit that God our loving Father, permits us to fall into trouble or danger very often for much good. We are chastened, depend upon it, that some benefit may accrue to us, especially to those of us who are His children. The exercise of God's will is too high for us to understand, but each of us I think should be willing to say "' though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' "

"Ah, Mr. Huntly," replied the young man, carelessly, "I am not up to theological argument at all; I was merely speaking in as rational and matter-of-fact a manner as I could, and somehow I can't reconcile the two."

"You are not the only one who found that a difficult

matter," rejoined the Clergyman, good humouredly ; " there was another, and a very faithful man too, who, when greatly troubled said, ' oh, thou preserver of men, why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself ? ' "

" I told you he could preach well," whispered Harris to his nearest neighbour.

Hillier made no rejoinder to Mr. Huntly's last remark, for, though candid and outspoken, he was not at all partial to, and tried to avoid, religious discussion, for the plain reason that he knew little or nothing, and cared far less, about religion, or as he termed it theology.

" What brutes those Madras servants are, Sir," said O'Rourk, desirous to change the subject—" that rascally boy of your's deserves to be well flogged and then hung."

Mr. Huntly opened his eyes wide on the speaker, but said quietly. " Poor wretch, poor wretch, he certainly did prove a rascal. I had hoped better things of him, but as it turned out, I am grievously disappointed."

" Oh, so you will be Sir with ivery one of them if you expect honesty. I belave myself that their hearts are as black as their skins."

" Until, by the grace of God, their hearts are changed, I fancy you should add," said the Clergyman.

" I don't think there's a native ever had any of that grace in him ;" the impulsive Irishman blurted out.

“ Ah my dear Sir, dont be too hasty ; judge not that ye be not judged ; I hope some day to convince you with God’s help that there is free grace for all who accept of it, no matter what the colour of their skins may be ; but you have not as yet told me, Mr. Gough” he went on, turning with great self-possession to our hero, “ how you have hurt your arm.”

“ It’s only a little cut, merely the result of a general melee, or *shindy*, as my friend O’Rourk would express it, with that tiger over there.”

“ Och then indade that’s a nate way of putting it,” cried the Hibernian ; “ there’s a saying that too many cooks spoil the broth, but there were too many nearly cooked my friend Gough’s goose in this case.”

“ Indeed !”

“ I’ll explain the entire matter to you Sir,” said Nerton, “ since I see that Mr. O’Rourk seems bent on making the most out of a mere accident,” and, with this preface, he described with great elaborate minuteness the death of the tiger ; but somehow did not care to mention that he would have been much better pleased had his knife reached Gough’s heart instead of his arm.

“ Do you know any one in Sandybad, Mr. Huntly ?” asked our hero, who was engaged in preparing claret cup in a huge glass bottomed pewter belonging to the Mess.

“ No ! not one,” replied the other. “ I have had

two letters of introduction given to me before I left home ; one to a Bengal civilian whom, most probably, I shall never see ; and the other to a Colonel Maurice of the Madras Army, who" —

"Colonel Maurice ! why he's our Commandant, and is now at Rajooloopettah," interrupted Danniels.

"You dont say so, is he really ? that is very nice ; but let us be sure of it. The address on my letter is Colonel A. Maurice, Madras Army, They-etmyo."

"Oh, its the same Sir—the very same ; we've just left Burmah, you know."

"Gentlemen, this is very pleasant," said Mr. Huntly, smiling round upon them all, with a merry twinkle shining through his glasses, while he rubbed his hands together ; "very pleasant, very pleasant indeed. Colonel Maurice is an intimate friend of a very dear friend of mine, so I've no doubt but that we shall get on capitally. Bye the bye has he any family ? I think my friend mentioned that he was married."

"Oh yes !" replied Danniels, "some (I dont know how many) in England, or Ireland I should say, and three out here with himself and wife—two little boys, and a grown up daughter."

"Such a charming young lady, Mr. Huntly !" cried Boots, brimful of chaff. "She has been captivating half the Regiment off and on for

the last year ; but we're all with the exception of one"——

" I think you're stretching a point, Smiley," interrupted Gough, suddenly. Miss Maurice has scarcely been out here with her father a year."

" That may be," rejoined the young man, carelessly, " but as I was saying," he went on, " she's so good, that there's not one of us, with one exception only, will go near her."

" Indeed !" said the Clergyman, " in what way is she so very good ?"

" Oh, in a pious religious way, Sir. I came out in the same ship with her from home, and I know she would never speak about anything but religion. She avoided any of our little recreations like poison ; would never join the little dancing parties we worldly ones used to get up, and whenever she got an opportunity would be sure to commence talking of religion. It's a thousand pities, Mr. Huntly, for she's a very nice girl ; but I am sorry she indulges *her* little hobby to such an extent."

" I dont call it a hobby at all," remarked the Clergyman, " I think she shows her sense. A person who is really religious is, I am sure, perfectly right in expressing his or her convictions on the subject to others, and in acting up to those honest convictions faithfully ; but it's a pity," he continued " that Miss Maurice's piety should have

the effect of driving most of you away. Is she attractive?"

"Very much so indeed," returned Boots "she has a neat figure, an agreeable *piquant* face, and oh, such a charming voice for singing; but then she sings nothing but Psalms and Hymns—to judge from what we heard of your powers in that line, Mr. Huntly, you'll suit her admirably."

"Shouldn't wonder if the black coat took the shine out of all the scarlets," cried Hillier, opening his cheroot case.

"Ah, so it might Sir," rejoined the new comer, in a pleasant tone, "were there not a certain Mrs. Huntly and three little bairns belonging to the black coat in question, in a certain romantic 'toun,' vulgarly called 'Auld Reekie.' The said Mrs. Huntly would, I imagine, object to any such proceeding; but you said there was an exception to those kept away by this young lady's piety, Mr. Smiley," he continued; "do *you* happen to form that exception?"

"Not I, Sir," replied the light-hearted young man, "I'm not very partial to spooning on religious damsels. It's not my line at all. I prefer nice jolly go-ahead girls who are" —

"Time servers," put in Mr. Huntly, "mere time servers; oh yes, jollity and mirth are excellent—do one a great deal of good; but did it

never strike you, Mr. Smiley, that jollity and mirth cannot always last?"

"The more reason why we should all be jolly while they do last," replied Boots.

"*Rejoice, oh young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,*" said Mr. Huntly, who was quite as out-spoken as Hillier.

"Didn't I say he was a good preacher?" remarked Cocky, looking round triumphantly. "I'll back him to preach against any Chaplain in the service."

"Have more respect for the cloth can't you, Harris," said Danniels, sharply.

"I wasn't aware that what I said was disrespectful to any cloth," replied the young man, "and I'm sure it would give me much pleasure to hear Mr. Huntly preach from the verse he quoted just now. I'm perfectly serious—I like a good sermon ; not a long dry rigmarole, but something decisive and telling."

"I hope we'll have a sermon from you, Sir, in camp on Sunday next," said Nerton—"I like a good sermon too."

"And so do I," added Smiley, "in the right time and place."

"My dear fellow," said the clergyman, turning

towards the last speaker, and uttering his words distinctly in his rich thrilling tones. "It's perfectly true there is a time and place for everything; and I entirely agree with the generality of social opinion, that at what is intended to be a merry jovial meeting a religious discussion is somewhat out of place; and yet for the life of me I cannot see why a man should not be a truly honest believer, and a thoroughly religious man, and not be merry and jovial and light-hearted at the same time. We are all enjoying God's gifts here, health, and strength, and food, and happy hearts. Why should any one of us entirely avoid the great name of the Giver, and especially of Christ Jesus in our conversation? Can we not enjoy the good things of life, and not feel ashamed to speak of our Creator? We all acknowledge Him, or profess to do so; and yet His great name is carefully avoided among us. Is this right? I cannot think so, and I am not ashamed of my opinion."

Mr. Huntly's out-spoken expression of opinion was followed by an awkward pause. No one attempted to make any refutation or reply; but as the clergyman had finished his luncheon, and laid down his knife and fork, Hillier was the first to break the silence by politely offering his cheroot-case to him, and eulogizing its contents.

"I'm sure you'll like them, Sir," he continued—"Number 1 Trichies—made to order for me by

the enterprising cheroot merchant, Mooteswamy Moodeliar. Now then Gough out with your *chuckmuk** and strike a light."

"That's easier said by you than done by me," replied the Adjutant, looking significantly at his bound-up arm. "Here Rustum ; *Ág!*" and he tossed the *chuckmuk* to his pattern man.

Mr. Huntly chose a weed, with thanks, and turned towards Shaik Rustum who was busy clicking away at the flint and steel, and trying to ignite the end of a long roll of cotton sown up in a strip of red cloth. This was the signal for every one to pull forth their cheroot-cases, and in a few moments the light blue smoke, that has done so much towards soothing some, and greatly annoying others, ascended gracefully from the mouths of each of our party, for they all smoked.

"Well this is what I call decidedly pleasant," remarked our friend, Harris, placidly, as he lay on his back, well shaded from the sun by the leaves of a custard-apple tree. "I know nothing so pleasant as an after-tiffin siesta, with a good weed between one's lips. India is not so bad after all, when viewed in this calm philosophical light. I decidedly enjoy it ; I think it a delightful country."

"You wont say that after two or three tours in the Main Guard at Sandybad, my Cocky," said Hillier.

* Flint and steel.

"Bet you a gold mohur, I will," replied Harris. "I've made up my mind some time since, to be jolly if possible under aggravating circumstances like Mark Tapley, and I'm hanged if I wont be. There's all sorts of fun to be had at Sandybad to counterbalance the disagreeables, and I mean to go in for it. There's the Buttpillay and Mohrally races,—bye the bye I think I'll enter my Pegu 'Meima' in the pony race ; I'll back her to win."

"Then there's generally a ball or two at the Public rooms," added Smiley—"and there's a Corps Dramatique with a splendid Theatre—I mean to shine on the boards when I get to Sandybad. And wont it be jolly if there's a lady actress or two !"

"Which do you patronise, Boots, high or low comedy or ~~tragedy~~?" asked O'Rourk.

"The first walking gent in either is *my* line," replied the other, "Catesby in Richard the Third, with his 'early village cock,' and 'be more yourself, my lord'—or one of the young fellows that makes love to widow Green. The latter is pleasant-er, if widow Green is a charming go-ahead lady."

"There's a good Library in Sandybad too, I've heard," remarked Gough—"no end of Europe papers, periodicals and new books."

"Ah, I'm glad to hear that !" said Mr. Huntly. "I revel in a good book."

"Oh India's not such a bad country at all," cried Cocky, from beneath his tree. "I say Hillier ; can't

you let us all have a verse or two on Dillon's parody on 'Red, White, and Blue?' "

"Fire away, Longlegs; it's first rate. Mr. Huntly will be charmed with it."

Hillier, thus urged, made no objections; so clearing his throat, and moistening it with brandy and soda water he commenced—

Oh India! thou land of the griffin!
Thou home of the black and the brown!
Thou glorious country for tiffin!
Thou land of the shaven crown!
Where sepoy and surdars assemble,
With their Generals and colours in view;
Oh well may the enemy tremble
When opposed by our brave 52!*

Should war spread its dread desolation,
O'er any wild part of the land,
This southern part of the nation
Will surely be a trusty band.
How faithful they've proved from the first!
Our brave Musselman and our Hindoo;
When around them war's terrors have burst,
They were heroes, our brave 52!

Then toddy! fresh toddy bring hither,
As it's taken cool from the palm tree
May the Company's laurels ne'er wither,
For †chooshee wo tyar we'll be.
May Madras from its Gov'nor ne'er sever,
But still to our rulers prove true,
Here's the H. E. I. C. S. for ever!
Three cheers for our brave 52!"

"Chorus, gentlemen!" shouted Cocky.

"Three cheers for our brave 52!"

* In allusion to the M. N. I.

† "Delighted and ready."

“That’s a capital parody ; first rate !” remarked Mr. Huntly. “Who did you say composed it ?”

“Oh Dillon of ours, Sir—he’s our Regimental poet laureate. He rattles off doggerel, like what you have heard, at a great rate. I caught him seated at his tent door the other day, writing a sonnet to one of the old Bullocks that draws his bandy and I made him give me a copy, which I have in my pocket ; would you like to hear it. It’s quaint.”

“Thanks ; certainly, let us have it, by all means.”

Harris pulled out his pocket book, and read the following with much gusto :—

“Yes, *Byle* ;* thou art a most contented beast,
If not contented—stoical at least.
Phlegmatical thou art, and cold of blood ;
Caring for no one ; nothing—but thy cud.

That thou art lazy, there is no denying,
For on thy *ragee* straw thou wouldst be lying
All morning, noon, and night, in heat or rain—
Something in thy stomach—nothing in thy brain.

Lie still old Byle, and chew thy cud in peace,
Too soon shall this thy ruminating cease !
Thy master, in a *cumbly*† of his own dark hue,
Will rouse thee presently with a male bamboo !

* A Bullock.

† A coarse woollen blanket.

One night I saw thee in the mud and wet,
Dragging my little all to Juggiapett,
I saw Ramswamy twist thy tortured tail ;
I heard him thrash thee as though with a flail.

But yet he loves thee in a manner rude ;
For thou dost bring him what he gets of food.
Doth he not groom thee with a wisp of grass,
And tip thy graceful horns with bits of brass ?

Those flies annoy thee ! ah, I see they do ;
They seek the raw parts of thy carcase too.
What with each rav'nous insects sting and bite,
Thy tired tail keeps moving day and night.

Then masticate thy ragee—chew thy cud !
Again to-morrow thou must toil through mud,
But haul my bandy onward in good style,
And I will dub thee a most *pucka* Byle."

Loud was the burst of laughter, which greeted each verse, as Cocky read the above effusion from the pen of Dillon ; for its serio-comic nature, its tough subject, and the very truthfulness of its sentiments were all conducive to provoke mirth.

" Don't you think it's time we should be moving camp-wards, my lads ?" asked old Danniels, looking at his watch. " It's nearly 3 o'clock."

" And we have a long march of it before us ; yes, I vote we sound the recall, and start."

At this juncture, little Timmah, ever on the alert, rose from his squatting posture at some distance away, and going up to Harris with a soft

gliding motion, pointed silently in the direction of the nullah.

“ By Jove ! black buck,” said Cocky, in an excited whisper ; “ a herd of eight I think ! ”

Aye, there they were, standing all huddled together on the opposite bank of the nullah, and staring fixedly but timourously at the strange sight of a party of Europeans seated, or reclining in various odd attitudes. They were certainly beautiful animals, and as they stood, backed by the dense foliage from which they had issued, they would have formed a study worthy of Landseer’s brush. They were perfectly motionless, and seemed as though fascinated by the sight they were beholding, with their large brown gentle eyes opened widely. They stood with erect heads, from which the branching horns rose like the plume of a Roman warrior ; their ears cocked and bent forward, and their beautifully dark and glossy coats looking as though they had been daily groomed.

But Harris, however, was not going to waste time in making observations ; he told the party in a low tone to continue talking just as usual, in order to attract the deer’s attention, and then grasping his rifle, was on his knee in a moment, and taking aim at the chest of the foremost buck. /

But the agile animal, seeing the movement, was alarmed at once, and with one little warning stamp of his neat foot, leaped into cover in a twinkling,

followed by the whole herd, before the sportsman had made up his mind to draw trigger.

Cocky gave vent to certain expressions, unfortunately too often made use of by men when vexed --in fact he swore terribly.

At this, Mr. Huntly's face grew pale ; he rose, and began strolling away as calmly as he could.

" I beg your pardon for swearing in your presence, Mr. Huntly," cried Cocky, calling after him, " but it was such a confounded sell, I couldn't help it."

" You haven't offended *me*, Mr. Harris," replied the Clergyman, in very gentle tones. " So you need not beg my pardon. I wont begin to lecture you on the fearful habit which I see you allow to govern you, my dear fellow ; but I wish you would think calmly over it, and see, not only how useless it is, but *how blasphemous to your God.*"

Harris received this in silence, and with a bad attempt at a careless smile ; Danniels gave an expressive whistle, and muttered " You've caught it this time, my lad ;" Hillier yawned, and stretched himself with a look of profound contempt at the parson ; Smiley smiled at Cocky's awkward attempt to look self-possessed, and O'Rourk, with a chuckle, demanded another peg in a loud tone.

Mr. Huntly then sat down again. That he was an impulsive sort of man it was plain to all, but they did not like him the less for that. He detested

swearing, for he knew how really deleterious its effects were ; and an imprecation so unholy as that uttered by Cocky pained him to the heart, though it might not be levelled at himself. He remembered the unhappy time when he himself had uttered the like, and he looked back to it with sadness and horror, for he recollected how difficult it was to conquer the habit ; and now that he had conquered it by God's help, it was painful—very painful—to him to hear those around him blaspheming. It mattered little how carelessly or in what spirit the mere words were uttered. The sin was hidden there. The glaring sin—of a perishing mortal ready to use the name of the Great Loving IMMORTAL with angry contempt, and coupling that name with awful expressions—was there lurking in the breast, to be called forth by the enemy of that Great Immortal as opportunity offered, as another sting to which the tortured conscience might be subjected to hereafter.

These were the clergyman's grave thoughts, as he took his seat again among the group of careless men, and it is not to be wondered at, that they kept him silent for the present.

• Meanwhile the cavady coolies, by Danniels' orders, and under the exemplary superintendence of the Mess Servant, were packing up the larger fragments of the tiffin, together with the plates, dishes, and glasses into their baskets. The beaters

all seated together were amicably passing round to each other the orthodox *pan suparee** of the East Indies, or indulging in an occasional long-drawn whiff from a not very elaborate hookah, manufactured from the shell of a cocoanut, and a small hollow reed. The Shikarries had retired to the stream in the nullah to wash their cracked feet, and moisten their dry lips and throats—and everything looked like a preparation for the return march.

* A certain leaf eaten with a small mixture of tobacco, betel-nut, and lime, or *chunam*.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOME TRUTHS.

ALL were soon ready ; and then, headed by their Shikarries, who seemed to know their whereabouts with the greatest exactness, the party started off in little groups of two or three. The skin of the poor man-eater, whose carcass was left just where he had expired, was borne along by four of the beaters, who kept it stretched out as they proceeded. Mr. Huntly and Gough were together, and followed behind all the rest, for the Adjutant's quiet manner, frank face, and cordial good humour, had won the Clergyman's favorable opinion, and had irresistably drawn him to seek a closer acquaintance with their owner.

They talked on various subjects as they strode side by side through the thick jungle ; Gough carrying his shot-gun over his left shoulder, and closely followed by Rustum bearing his broken rifle. O'Rourke had gone on with Hillier and Harris, for he dreaded a walk with the parson, fearing he would *talk religion* ; and indeed the little man was rather unsteady on his homeward walk, having imbibed his favorite beverage rather too freely, and the knowledge of this added to his wish not to be under the observation of Mr. Huntly.

Harris and Hillier had a lengthened discussion on the *padre* : Hillier asserting that such a man would do more harm than good, and Harris begging to differ with the former.

"I'll like him very well," continued Cocky. "He spoke up, and wasn't ashamed of it either ; no beating about the bush, but coming straight at the point like an honest man. I rather respect him now for the blowing up he gave me ; wasn't the poor fellow hurt at my swearing?"

"All sham in my opinion," replied Longlegs ; "his dignity as a parson was hurt, that was all. If you had done it at Mess wouldn't he have been down your throat? These Pharisaical fellows think no end of themselves, Cocky. They'll talk to you like saints, and slip you a tract, and cry over you if you're sick ; but they think themselves insulted if a fellow raps out a harmless oath."

"Come, come ; old fellow, an oath such as mine wasn't quite the cheese though."

"Bah !" returned the other, "where's the harm in it ? You didn't knock down any one with it, that I saw ; it slipped out unawares perhaps, and there's the end of it. I shouldn't have apologized."

"I'll back him to have gone off, and left the party if I hadn't."

"He might have gone to Jericho for all I care," answered Hillier, and he added an oath therewith

without hesitation ; "but these ranting fellows," he continued, "do a precious lot of harm, Cocky ; they rile a fellow so confoundedly with their uncalled-for twaddle, that he takes a disgust to the whole business, and washes his hands of religion ever after. I was once nearly *converted*, as they call it, by a German Missionary, but by a piece of good luck, I got away from him, and still retain my good sense."

Meanwhile Nerton and Smiley were engaged in conversation some two hundred yards further on. Old Danniels had been with them, but he halted a little to examine, and pluck up, a peculiar kind of grass ; (for he was a bit of a botanist, and never went through the jungle without bringing home some specimen,) so the two were left to themselves, to Nerton's great relief.

"I see you've been taking my advice, Smiley," he began, when he found Danniels out of ear-shot. "You gave our friend a little rap, which wasn't very welcome, at the toast that was drank."

"Oh you mean Gough," returned the young man. "Yes, I did hit him rather ; but he's so thoroughly good-natured, it seems a sin to rile him so. He was precious nearly flinging me out of the tent this morning ; you'd have laughed to see the rage the poor spoon was in."

"What did you say to him, Boots ?"

"Oh, to rile him ? Why I dropped a hint to the

effect that she'd throw him overboard if he didn't turn religious; what you told me, you know, or something like it."

"Poor Gough, he's not at all a bad fellow," remarked Nerton; "but he's so *very* soft. You'll find he'll not bully you much longer, however, if you chaff him before the others; did you see how he gave in about the tiger?"

"Aye," said Smiley; "do you think that was because he was afraid of me?"

"Oh I don't say that, Boots; but I think he'll give way in many things, if you use your power judiciously. Where is he now?"

"Coming on in the rear with our friend the parson," replied Boots. "Isn't *he* a rum card, Nerton?"

"He certainly seems a bit of a Pharisee," said the other, thoughtfully. "I very much enjoyed his attack on you, Boots; do you think he is sincere, or a humbug?"

"Oh I don't think he's a humbug; he's too outspoken for that. I like his face rather, though I can't stand his trash. I wonder how Gough gets along with him."

"Do you know, Smiley, I'm beginning to think our Adjutant's an uncommonly deep knowing one," said Nerton, with an emphatic shake of his head. "He knows on which side his bread is buttered. Of course it's neither your business or mine, but

"I'll be very much surprised if our friend Charlie wont beat them all at Psalm-singing in a week or two."

"Ha ha," laughed Smiley—"that is good ; I never heard him sing anything yet."

"Oh that doesn't matter ; he'll get lessons, Boots ; but I'm sure our friend is going in for it. I saw his face brighten up when Padre Huntly spoke of his letter to the Colonel. Well, I only hope he'll be sincere, and not play the hypocrite—I hate a hypocrite."

Oh Nerton, Nerton, why did not you hate yourself then worst of all, for you know well what you are ?

"His stopping behind with the Padre now looks suspicious ; doesn't it Boots ? they'll be firm friends before they're in Camp. Master Gough will have confided in him ; promised to be good, and asked for his influence. Shouldn't wonder if we'd have a jolly wedding before we get to Sandybad."

"He wouldn't ask me to it then," said Smiley. "Miss Ada thinks I'm a fearfully black sheep, and he's not over-pleased at the way I bully him."

"Oh yes, you'll be asked, Boots ; don't be afraid. He may not exactly make you best-man, but he would not leave you out of the number of the guests for a good deal ; you've got a greater hold

over him than you think, my lad ; keep on chaffing him, he'll be humbled down wonderfully. See if he wont.

The subject of this deep scheming talk of Nerton was meanwhile in close conversation with Mr. Huntly on different topics. The latter found him well informed on Indian policy, and well able to define his own views of it, and so they rattled along pleasantly, touching on the revenue of the country, its vast resources, its fertility, its wealth on one hand, and its poverty on the other. Then they descanted on its inhabitants, their fanaticism, their ignorance, and the baneful effects of caste, and at last launched into the subject of European society, especially that met with in Military stations.

"We are queer people, out here, we of the H. E. I. C. S.," said Gough ; "we seem to have a continual and unquenchable thirst for excitement. You cannot have noticed it, Sir, being only what is called a *griffin* ; but still"——

"What's that ?" cried the Clergyman ; "A *griffin* !"

"Yes, it's a name all new-comers go by out here, until they've been a year in the country ; I don't know what it's taken from, but it's invariably applied. But as I was saying, you'll find we can't get on without unceasing excitement. I suppose it's in the climate."

"Well, it may be, Gough—you'll allow me to drop the Mister, will you not ?"

Gough nodded, with a smile.

"I can easily fancy that the ennui and languor of the hot season make one all the more ready to rush into gaiety and frivolity, when the thermometer begins to get a little lower; and I think it must be more common among you military people. You young men," continued Mr. Huntly, tapping our hero playfully on the shoulder, "seem to me to have very little to do; and if it is so, of course you must find a quiet garrison life remarkably dull."

"That's what it is, Mr. Huntly, we have not half work enough to do, though there's a wide field for any one of us that has energy enough to put his shoulder to the wheel. Those on the Regimental Staff have necessarily something more to do than the others, but it's not hard by any means in a Native Corps. Ramswamy is a much more docile animal to work with than the British soldier; he doesn't give much trouble, and our Company Officers are often terribly at a loss to know how to spend their time."

"I know something of Military life, Gough," remarked the other, "and it has often struck me that, while in garrison at least, an Officer spends half his time in the Mess Room. But billiards, and rackets, and racing, and shooting, and boating, and such amusements cannot always be got at. Something new then is required, and if this is not attainable, a careless fellow is very apt to excite him-

self artificially by drinking, and once that habit gains a hold—farewell all peace of mind. By the bye," he went on, assuming a graver tone, "I noticed there was one of your party—now I hope you won't be offended—who appears too indulgent to himself in what is termed 'liquoring up.' It's the Irishman, I mean; have I judged aright?"

"I'm afraid you have, Sir; it's poor O'Rourke. He certainly does take more than is good for him. He's my best friend in the Regiment, and I'd give a great deal to see him thoroughly cured of the habit, for it will be a curse to him some day, I feel sure."

"How long is it since he began indulging in it?"

"Oh not very long; he took to it gradually, only some months ago."

"Then there is great hope. Oh Gough, if you are really that man's friend—friend, in the sound honest sense of the word—will you not do your very best to draw him out of the danger he's in?"

"I have tried everything with him, except force, and of course that's out of the question," replied Gough, sadly. "You know, Mr. Huntly, I'm not a religious man; never was—and never likely to become—one, so I can't bring any but matter-of-fact common-sense arguments to bear against him. You might perhaps."

"You speak as if you thought religion and common-sense were incompatible."

“Then I don’t mean it; for I’m sure they can be reconciled, though I’ve never cared to test it myself. I’ve a great respect for a truly straightforward religious person, but I must say I’ve met with some whose religious hobby so affected their minds, that they seemed to be strangers to common-sense. There’s no doubt that it’s the right thing to be prepared to meet one’s God; and many are, I’m sure, though those around them don’t know it. I only wish———there, never mind.”

He chucked some leaves off a little bush near him; crushed them up in his hand, and then flung them away with a pettish jerk, as though he were vexed at something; but he did not finish his sentence; he was sorry he had ever begun it, and he kept silent, hoping the other would change the subject.

The other didn’t speak either; he was waiting quietly, with a gentle smile, expecting his friend to tell him what it was he wished for. So there was a pause for a few moments, during which Gough tried to change his gun to his right shoulder, but found that his arm, paining him too much, was unequal to the task. Mr. Huntly perceiving this, immediately begged that he might be permitted to bear it for him; and after a good deal of demur on the part of his companion, succeeded in carrying both his point and the weapon, but not until Gough had prudently taken the caps off and lowered both

cocks. The latter then changed the subject without any difficulty.

"Did that thieving boy of yours actually leave you nothing but what you carry with you?"

"Nothing else, I assure you. He was kind enough to let me have the suit I was in the habit of wearing on my journey—a rusty black, as you may perceive; but I suppose there are tailors to be found in Sandybad."

"Oh of course there are, as I know to my cost; they're natives, of course, and will take you in if they possibly can."

"I suppose they'll discover I'm a——what d'ye call it—a griffin, before very long; but you were saying a moment ago, that you wished something or other, and did not finish your sentence; may I ask what it is you wish for, my friend; perhaps I can put you in the way of obtaining it."

Gough looked round at the Clergyman as if to divine his thoughts; and, as he met a frank, unflinching gaze from those dark expressive eyes, he felt he knew what was meant; and that it was well meant.

"Oh never mind!" he answered carelessly, "it's no use my telling you, Sir; I don't think you could help me."

"Neither of us can tell that, unless I know what it is you need," was the pleasant answer. "I may

be able to serve you, and as I'd like to be a friend to you, I would certainly try. I think however I can guess what it is you require."

"What is it, then?"

"A greater happiness than the world can give you."

The young man smiled bitterly, and flung away his cheroot, pettishly. "Aye! God knows I have need of it, very much need of it," said he; "the world has not given me much of that, or religion either," he added, almost fiercely. "I've been most unhappy all day, though I've been trying to drive care away, and forget it; but it won't do."

"Then you should still go on seeking happiness from above," replied the Clergyman, gently. "Oh my friend, if you could only experience the peace of mind that is given to one who casts all his care on his God, you would not cease going to Him for help. Why don't you carry your trouble to the foot of God's throne? There is no difficulty in it; Christ's death has made it easy for a poor burdened man to approach his God. Do you take your care, whatever it may be, to Him to lighten for you?"

"I have done so, Sir, but honestly, I am no better for it."

"And whose fault is that do you think, Gough? Do not deceive yourself; it is your own."

"I am sure it is, Mr. Huntly; it seems to me

I don't pray aright. I'll tell you the truth," he went on, in a bold open manner. "I doubt very much that my prayers should be heard at all; there's a hundred reasons to one against it. What am I, that God should stoop to hear what I ask? If I were sure I was praying to some purpose, knew who I was praying to, and was certain I'd be heard and answered, it would be another matter. But I'm always doubting its utility at all; doubting every thing in connection with it, and then where's the use of it. It's a mockery! God hasn't heard my prayers yet."

"You cannot make God a liar, my friend, can you? it depends on yourself whether you are heard or not. It's entirely your own fault. He has said, 'Ask and ye shall receive,' but he has also said, 'Ye ask, and obtain not because ye ask amiss.' Now I think before you can ask God, through Jesus Christ, for anything so as to obtain, you must be accepted in His sight. Are you so?"

"*He* knows that," replied the young man, "how can I tell whether I am or not?"

"The old, old story," said Mr. Huntly, thoughtfully, "I've heard that reasoning often; but the fact is, my dear fellow, you cannot bring *yourself* to believe in the very simplicity of the way you are saved."

Gough was silent.

"Perhaps you do not feel that you need any

Saviour," continued the other ; "but let me ask you in all honesty, are you *certain* of entering Heaven through your own merits—through your own exemplary conduct whilst on this earth? You cannot hope so. Some deed of sin must surely prick and sting your conscience sometimes ; and can you hope to enjoy life everlasting hereafter with any stain of sin upon you—never ! Heaven is for the *pure* ; you must needs be *sinless*, if you would enter there."

"Sinless ! what's that you say ?" cried Gough.
"Who then can be saved ?"

"All those who have sinned, and come short of God's glory, but to whom Christ's righteousness has been imputed ; all those who are made clean by the blood of Christ ; there is no condemnation for such ; do you not understand me ?"

"I do Mr. Huntly, but I—I can't believe it."

"Say rather you *will not*. God's wondrous love, in giving a substitute for you, passes your comprehension."

"But that doesn't alter the fact," said the young man. "If God has really given a substitute for me, I must be a pardoned man ; there can be no condemnation for me."

"But you cannot believe this ; you will not take advantage of it, and so you are still unhappy. Would it not be more reasonable, if you were simply to accept what God says as perfectly true ;

know that you are saved, and live the rest of your life as a saved man."

"I don't understand you clearly."

"Then I will put a somewhat parallel case to you. A certain rebel, who had been sentenced to death for treason, was thrust with many others into a dungeon from whence he was to be removed only to his grave. While lying in the carelessness of despair, in his dark cell, almost reconciled to, and yet wishing to escape from, his ignominious but justly merited fate, he heard the voice of a special Herald of the king proclaiming that there was free pardon for all ; that the Prince of the land had undertaken to bear the punishment in their stead, and that such was the love of the king towards the misguided rebels, that he had accepted the atonement thus offered, and was willing to set every prisoner at large. He further stated that the Prince had been executed ; had borne to the utmost the heavy penalty of the law in their stead, and that now they were free ; their prison doors were left wide open, and they might, if they chose, leave their noisome cells, and walk forth into the bright glorious light of Heaven, as free as the air around them. Their safeguard would be the name of the Prince ; no one could attempt to imprison them again, or even hurt or injure them if they pleaded his death for their safety ; and that the king would deal with them as sons, remembering the atonement made for them.

Let me now ask you, my dear fellow, what would be your idea of the conduct of the rebel, who, instead of rising with joy unspeakable and walking into liberty through the open door, spurned the good news, or let it pass unheeded, and remained still lying grovelling on his dungeon floor, doubting the truth of the herald's proclamation? You would say there must have been some great charm for him in that loathsome dungeon; something he valued better than life and freedom, that he did not at least try to walk out of it. Of what use was the death of the Prince to him? none at all; he might lie there till he died, but would that be freedom? And here *you* are doubting the very words of God Himself. You will not believe that eternal life is yours from this very moment, if you will only accept of it; and in that unbelief you prefer to remain. You will stay doubting, doubting, doubting, instead of gladly saying, 'Lord, I take what thou hast offered,' and if you will still go on in your unbelief, Death will come, and where will your salvation be then? Will Christ's death have been of any use to you? no—none—none."

"You are very hard upon me, Sir," said Gough, and then after a pause, he added, "and so you believe I shall be lost?"

"Not if you accept this great offer of salvation," replied the other. "Thank God, I am no man's judge. I will condemn no one; but you will find

either your salvation or condemnation, as you choose, in the eighteenth verse of the third of John's Gospel—judge for yourself. One thing, however, I should, and will, tell you, and that is, that 'there is no other name given under Heaven whereby we may be saved but that of Christ Jesus.' "

"I would like to be really a Christian," muttered Gough—"and yet—no ; there are too many things I should have to give up. The fact is, Sir—I may as well be plain with you, I have a very good reason for not showing myself one at present at least. I mean that appearances would be very much against me. I know what all our fellows would think of me, if they saw me going about quite seriously, quoting Scripture and repeating Hymns. They'd make me miserable."

"Oh I don't think they would, Gough ; don't judge them harshly. Though they may not be following the Lord themselves, they really admire a straight-forward man who acts up to his convictions, and I think that, however they may ridicule you at first, they'll soon cease to do so, seeing it has no effect on you."

"It's not ridicule I fear, Sir," answered the young man, slightly hurt, "it's evil repute. You don't know what I mean ; but there are certain circumstances under which I stand at present, that would make my being religious be put down to any thing but conscientious motives. I will never—

no never—commit an action that may sully my good name in the eyes of others ; and this would not only injure my reputation in the eyes of others, but injure the cause of true religion itself. I fancy I could not honestly be a true Christian without others finding it out sooner or later ; and they'd misunderstand my motive, and despise me. God knows I feel the faith, you spoke of just now, taking hold of my heart ; and I shall ever be grateful for your teaching ; but everything is against me. I must put down the feeling, and—and I dare say I shall get on just as well without that faith. You need not urge me, Sir," he continued, seeing that Mr. Huntly was evidently about to remonstrate with him, "I've thought over the matter and not even to gain my dearest heart's desire, would I let any one suspect that there was any change in me. Come, let's alter the subject ; it worries me greatly, and is entirely thrown away upon me."

"Gough ! you're a curious mixture, I must say," replied Mr. Huntly, stopping in his walk, and looking gravely at his companion with folded arms. "You seem so bold, and frank, and fearless, and yet you will not act according to the dictates of your conscience, because you fear what those around may remark of you. I think, my dear friend, that if instead of" —

"Ah Mr. Huntly, for Heaven's sake cease," cried the young man, in a painful, trembling tone. "I

cannot bear it. You don't know what a struggle it is to me. We are very good friends at present, and I trust will always remain so ; but you are trying my patience ; what have I to do with all that you told me of, of Christ's love ? It's not for me at present, and I can't bear it. Let us understand each other, please. I do not wish to be further urged. So there, let the matter rest !”

After this, Mr. Huntly felt that any further recurrence to the subject at present would be *mal apropos* ; but as he walked silently on, he pondered earnestly over the young man's words. He was too much accustomed to meet with rebuffs, and harsh words, from those whom he tried to counsel, to feel in the slightest degree offended with his companion now, and wondered greatly what those circumstances could be which now hindered Gough from following the evident convictions of his heart. *You* will not be surprised, reader, at the latter coming to the decision he had stated, for you know exactly how matters stood with him as regards Miss Maurice. He feared that she, as well as his brother Officers, would mis-understand his motives, and thereby her love for him, (which she had confessed to) might be turned to scorn of him. He was acutely sensitive of the slightest slur cast on his honor, and as he was certain, perfectly certain, from all Smiley had already said to him, that the honesty of his motive

would be called in question, if he ever gave any one the slightest reason to suppose him religious, he at once made up his mind to drive all graver thoughts away, and give no one the slightest opportunity to doubt his sincerity. The more he thought of the whole matter, the more perplexed he became ; he felt a yearning—an earnest longing he could not account for—to attain the peace of mind, conscience whispered him would be his, if he became a real servant of his Maker, but he felt he could not be so without its effecting a noticeable change in his conduct and conversation, and this he feared (perhaps justly feared) would lead to his being suspected of hypocrisy. He felt the love of God towards him, in giving Christ to bear the *pains of death* in his stead, but—poor soul—he longed to drive it out, for he knew he must needs be changed. Never before had the grand glorious tenets of the true Christian faith been so palpably visible to his mind's eye—so clearly brought home to him in all their striking simplicity. But now he earnestly wished he could doubt them, for he knew that to be thoroughly honest he must act up to them, and so he made the determination that if it were possible, he would resist these serious convictions of his heart to the very utmost, in order that his good name—“*the immediate jewel of his soul*”—should not be tarnished. Mr. Huntly, on the other hand, was gravely weighing the

conclusion Gough had arrived at, in his own mind, and being in ignorance of the circumstances alluded to by the latter, was greatly pained at it. Had he known the young man's motive for altogether eschewing religion, he might have reasoned with him on the folly of permitting his strong love for a fellow-mortal to be the idol which, undoubtedly, was the cause of his being inimical to God's love. He might have shown him what a snare it was to him, to keep him grovelling on the things of clay, when so bright a heavenly freedom was within his reach. And he would most likely have expressed his opinion that Miss Maurice was perfectly right, in refusing to unite herself for life below, to one whom she was tremblingly uncertain of ever meeting in bliss hereafter.

They did not speak for some time, and when they did, Gough launched into some topic widely different from the thoughts which were occupying his mind ; and which, though an interesting one in itself, was far from being so at present to the two friends. It served, however, slightly to occupy their attention for the remainder of their walk, and when they came in sight of the camp, with all its varied accompaniments, Gough resumed the carrying of his gun, and the two strode forward somewhat relieved, for really the latter part of their journey had been most irksome to both. They met the Colonel, with his wife and daughter, and

two little sons, coming towards them as they neared the first line of tents, for those who had preceded them had not failed, of course, to apprise Colonel Maurice of the stranger they had come across in the jungle, and his letter of introduction to him.

Hospitality in India seems to be conducted in a much more confiding spirit than in Britain. A letter of introduction almost entitles a stranger to be received as a guest for weeks, and even months in the former ; while in the latter its only result is, perhaps, but a few moment's interested conversation. Colonel Maurice fully imbibed the spirit of hospitality in its highest sense, and though he had never before heard of Mr. Huntly, or even knew as yet to whom he was indebted for the expected note of introduction, it was quite sufficient for him that a gentleman sought his friendship and the shadow of his tent ; and he had already given the necessary orders for his reception, and was prepared to act the host, for as long as his expected friend wished.

Mr Huntly bowed politely to the ladies, Gough following suit, and then turning to the Colonel who held out his hand, saluted him warmly.

"Welcome to Camp, Mr. Huntly," began the old Soldier. "My lads have been telling me of your misfortunes, and I shall be glad if I can be of use in counteracting them ; my wife will be charmed to be your hostess, until you're tired of us. This is Mr.

Huntly," he added, turning to Mrs. and Miss Maurice.

Both the ladies now spoke some words of cordial welcome, and in a very short time all stiffness and restraint had disappeared, and they were chatting together like old friends.

"We've been playing a game of croquet with the other ladies, and some of the Officers, Mr. Huntly," said Mrs. Maurice, in her pleasant tones; "but I feel sure you are too fatigued to enjoy the pastime very much this evening. Perhaps you would like however to be introduced to the players?"

Mr. Huntly signified a grateful assent, and they all moved off towards the temporary croquet ground, on which Mrs. Hearty, Mrs. Mackey, their respective husbands, and the poet of the Regiment were busy rokeying each other with good-humoured zeal. Meantime Gough, had slipped round to the side of the young lady; who, on perceiving his arm bound up, was of course greatly concerned to know the extent of the injury and its cause.

"Oh it's nothing, Miss Maurice." "I was cut with a knife by a mere accident; it's not painful; nor is it bodily pain I'm suffering from. You hurt me very much," he continued, in a low tone to her, "yesterday evening. You cut me to the heart."

She looked up at him with a sad smile—his tone

was not a very pleasant one, and it grieved her ; but she replied quietly, "And you are retaliating now ; don't you think you can hurt me also by talking of it. I told Papa and Mamma all about it, and they approve of my decision. Is it not better not to allude to it again?"

Gough was piqued at once ; at present he was in no very peaceful frame of mind. Her answer did not please him. She did not care for him, he thought ; she was trying to forget him ; and would no doubt very shortly succeed. Smiley's words in the tent that morning recurred just now to his memory, and the flush rose to his cheek that moment with angry vexation.

"I'll give you my opinion. You are very unjust ; I have decided also. I won't be bribed, Miss Maurice ; none of your *most loving, charitable religion* for me—Good evening, ladies ! Good evening, Colonel !" he added aloud, and as calmly as he could, raising his hat to the former. "I'll see you again often, Mr. Huntly, I suppose," turning to the Clergyman ; "I'll be off to change, and prepare for Mess"—and away he went in a whirl of angry resentful feelings.

"Will you come and tea with us, Gough, at seven?" the Colonel called after him.

"Not to-night, thank you, Sir," replied the young man, carelessly, and hardly looking round. "I'm tired, and will go to bed early."

“Humph!” remarked the Colonel. “Gough’s put out, I see.” Aye, poor fellow, he was put out, and perplexed; vexed with everything and everybody around. But far more vexed was he with himself, for the cruel hasty words he had uttered to her for whom he would willingly have served seven years.

CHAPTER IX.

WINE IN, WIT OUT !

ABOUT half past six that evening, a tea-table might have been standing just opposite the Colonel's tent door. At the head, and foot, sat Colonel and Mrs. Maurice ; and at the side, Mr. Huntly and Ada Maurice. It was a very substantial repast though it was only called "a tea." There was a nice cold pigeon pie, (Mrs. Maurice was famous for her pies), the contents of which had been sent over by some of the Officers, the day before, neatly tied together, and labelled a *la* English game. There was a famous piece of cold bacon too, one of the "*Europe Articles*," the Mess dealt in, and a damson tart fresh from the oven. Of course there was a baker en route with the Regiment ; and the nice fresh little loaves he had turned out, were piled on a wooden platter with the usual motto, "Waste not, want not," carved in relief on its edge.

Mrs. Maurice, who was busy pouring out the tea, was a little, good-tempered, motherly body, with one of those pleasant, kindly faces that, always greets you with a smile, and that you never perceive a frown upon. There was nothing grand in her appearance, or distant in her manner ; and so confiding was she in her fellow-mortals, that it was

no difficult matter to "take her in," as the saying is. Mr. Huntly felt very much at home with her, and enjoyed his chat with her, greatly taken by her kind manner, and the soft gentle face of Ada, which he would often find himself looking at through his glasses. His appearance was very much improved since he had had a refreshing "tub," and was arrayed in some of Colonel Maurice's cool cotton clothing. Almost the first thing the Colonel's chōkra* had asked him on his entering the tent set apart for his use, was, "Master want Barber, please Sar?" Master, after rubbing his cheeks and his chin, came to the conclusion, that though a barber wasn't absolutely necessary, he might be desirable as a luxury. So he was lathered, and taken by the nose, and gently stroked by the razor, till his face actually shone. He was greatly amused at the Barber's curiosity; the dapper little native pumped every part of the history of the robbery, and his subsequent wanderings in the jungle out of the "Padre Sahib," and then went off, delighted at the prospect of an increase to his income, to tell the first person he met, with various addenda of his own, all the Padre's misfortunes, leaving the latter to make his evening toilet in peace.

The Colonel was intent upon his Europe paper, with his legs stretched comfortably over another chair in front of him, sometimes putting a few

* Servant-boy; literally "a boy."

words into the conversation, or giving them all the benefit of some foreign news, while he sipped his tea, and eat his cold pie sparingly, as if it were an entirely secondary matter with him.

"You must not think my husband very rude," said Mrs. Maurice. "It's the way he usually spends his time at tea."

"Tut!" said the old Colonel, looking up from his paper; "Mr. Huntly is minding himself, my dear. He'll excuse me I know, if you two make yourselves agreeable to him. I say, Ada; what d'ye think of this news?" he continued, "*'bodies are now beginning to be worn very low and peaked.'*"

Why papa it doesn't make much difference to me, at Rajooloopettah at any rate," laughed Ada.

"Ada is a great worker, Mr. Huntly," said her mother; "she's very expert with her needle. Her papa wont require any slippers and smoking-caps, as long as she is with him."

"Ah, something like my wife, I suppose," replied Mr. Huntly. "The amount of crotchet work, wool-work, stocking-darning, and button-sowing, that she does is, perfectly astounding. I don't know how I shall manage to keep house until she comes out. I've got into a scrape without her already."

"Oh!" remarked the Colonel, from behind his paper; "men who place a good deal of dependence on their wives, in house-keeping, can't get on without them out here. I got into unpleasant

scrapes myself, when Mrs. Maurice was at home with the children ; I was cheated right and left. It was marvellous how the price of every article rose."

Amidst the conversation which followed, the first Bugle-call, to the Officers' Mess, sounded, and the servants were to be seen hurrying to and fro with various plates and dishes, for it is generally the custom in India when a Regiment is on the march, for the Mess crockery to be kept packed, each Officer sending some of his own crockery, cutlery, and glass, or more usually pewter, to adorn the Mess-table which, in consequence, presents a strikingly heterogeneous appearance.

"Your Officers dine rather late, don't they, Colonel?" asked Mr. Huntly.

"Well, I certainly think it would be more to their comfort to dine earlier on the march. But the dining members preferred seven ; so of course I left it to them. If they're not sleeping during the day, they're generally out shooting, and the lateness of the dinner hour gives them lots of time to be back and dress for it."

"Who's this coming along our way?" asked the Clergyman, looking at a short thick figure in a huge round, solar *topce*, and a thin, cotton suit much bespattered with red clay, who was approaching them, carrying a thin bamboo fishing rod in his hand.

"Oh that's Dr. Milton, our M. D., such an

enthusiastic fisherman, Mr. Huntly. I wonder if he has caught anything," and the Colonel laid down his paper, and sat up to greet the new comer.

The latter appeared much blown from his hasty waddling walk, and as he took off his basin-like hat to the ladies, it was plainly seen that the exercise had heated him greatly. "How do ladies?—evening Con'l. hot isn't it—eh?—humph!" and, as he took out a voluminous red silk handkerchief to wipe his brow with, he looked inquiringly towards the Clergyman.

"The Reverend Mr. Huntly—Doctor Milton," said the Colonel, introducing them. "My lads came across his Reverence, wandering in the jungle; lost for three nights and days—what do you think of that, Doctor?"

"Bless me!—how do, Sir?—how do?—lost eh? well, aint surprised—not a bit—lost myself often—not pleasant, though—want of food and sleep—system deranged—feel it for weeks—how d'ye feel?—pulse regular, eh?"

"Oh perfectly—perfectly Doctor, thank you."

"Don't believe it—something wrong—face pale—nerves out of order—gi'me your wrist—hem—thought so—want a tonic—drop the tea—take beer!"

"I don't think there's anything wrong, Doctor; I feel quite well at any rate."

"Just so—imagination!—Bad country,

though—you're a new comer—must be cautious. Prevention better than cure. Send you a tonic—do you a deal of good—fever in system—soon put you right—right as a trivet!"

"What's a trivet, Doctor?" asked Miss Maurice, laughing.

"Trivet, eh?—don't you know?—sharp girl—very sharp, take one up in no time—trivet, eh?—it's——losing my memory—quite forget—look up Dictionary—Johnson's—find it there."

"Do you know how he defines fishing, Doctor?" asked Mrs. Maurice.

"Heard it ma'am—bad definition, very—man of no taste—hated sport—bookworm—wore a wig, severe critic—mind his own business, better for him."

Mr. Huntly couldn't help laughing aloud, and remarking that it was fortunate Doctor Milton had never met Doctor Johnson.

"Have you caught anything, Doctor?" asked Mrs. Maurice.

Anything?—should think so—fine specimens—spotted *murrell*—all for you—specially for you—great delicacy—very voracious—where's my what d'ye call him?"—and the Doctor wheeled smartly round, and began looking about for something or somebody.

"It's my *pattaman*," he went on—"he's got 'em—never mind—send 'em over—boil 'em you know—and serve with butter—tails in mouths—like

whiting—be off now—hungry, precious hungry—first bugle blown.”

“ Won’t you have a cup of tea, or something before you go, Doctor ?” asked the elder lady.

“ Tea ? no thanks—don’t suit me— specially at night—acts on nerves—keeps me ‘ wake—head-aches, too—bye bye. Evening, Mr.———forget the name—never mind—bye bye,” and the little fellow waddled away to his own tent, seemingly well pleased with himself, and everybody round him.

“ He’s an odd character that,” said the Colonel, looking at the Doctor’s retreating figure, disappearing into the surrounding darkness ; “ I don’t suppose a kinder-hearted man exists ; he speaks roughly, because shortly, but he has very tender feelings. I wonder how he can take such interest in hooking a fish. He never eats one, I know.”

“ Oh Papa, I asked him one day why he was so fond of fishing,” cried Ada, merrily—“ and what do you think he said ? He must have been joking as he always is—that he fished from motives of vengeance.”

“ Vengeance ?”

“ Yes, isn’t it odd ?—Oh I laughed so at him ! because an uncle of his was killed by fishing. He was playing—I think he called it—a huge salmon ; and fell into deep water, and was drowned ; and now, Doctor Milton, out of revenge, must needs be a mortal enemy to the whole finny tribe.”

"Just like the Doctor, my dear," said Mrs. Maurice ; " he's always inventing funny stories."

" He was chaffing you, Ada," added her father, picking up his paper again. " He's no fool, I can tell you."

" Perhaps he does it to study piscial anatomy," put in Mr. Huntly, with a smile.

" Ah ! that may be," said Mrs. Maurice ; " for I know that he's always staring through a microscope when he has leisure ; and now that I think of it, when he sends me fish, I find they've been cut in different parts ; I could not make out what it was for at the time, but I now think you must be right, Mr. Huntly."

" Oh, and he has got such a queer dog too," said Ada, laughing ; " you never saw such a cur, Mr. Huntly. He calls it the Doctor, because, as he says, it prescribes for itself by eating grass whenever it's ill. It has only one eye, and one ear ; is lame on three legs, and has a kink, as the Doctor calls it, in its tail."

" What's a kink ?" asked Mr. Huntly, with a laugh.

" It's a kind of knot ; the brute's tail is out of joint, that's all," replied the Colonel, from the depths of his paper.

" I must make the acquaintance of this canine physician," rejoined Mr. Huntly. " It strikes me

his master is a benevolent person ; his face looks kind. The interest he took in my present state of health amused me greatly, I must say."

"Oh he's always asking people if there's anything the matter with them," said Mrs. Maurice ; "he's fond of his profession, I think."

The Colonel endorsed his wife's opinion, and added that he was clever in it too.

"There's the second bugle, for Mess, sounding !" cried Ada, "and oh ! look how gay the Mess-tent looks inside with all the bright lights and red jackets—they've sat down already."

"Hungry dogs !" murmured the Colonel.

Mr. Huntly turned round to look at the Mess-tent. As the evening was warm, the kanauts, or canvas sides, had been removed, and the Officers, now seated all round the table, were plainly visible in the clear yellow glare of the hanging oil-lamps. The servants were flitting about with great zeal, making the usual three turns round the table where only one was necessary, or standing *dust busta*, or with folded arms, at the backs of their respective Masters. Two were vehemently disputing for the possession of a plate, and one, who could be easily recognized as "Big Turban," was energetically uncorking beer bottles at a side table, while through the clear night air, the buzz and hum of conversation among the Officers ; the clatter of their knives and plates ; the jabbering of the cooks and *tanny-*

*catchies**; the popping of soda-water corks; the barking of pariah dogs, and the distant howling of the jackal could be distinctly heard. It was a very pleasing sight, however disagreeable the sounds might have been, and Mr. Huntly said as much, adding, however, that he wondered whether they had said grace.

“Grace! not they I’m afraid,” replied the Colonel. “Individually, some may perhaps have done so, but a common grace, before or after meals, at a Mess-table is very seldom heard, unless there happens to be a clergyman present, when it’s the habit to ask him to offer one. In my opinion there’s something morally wrong in neglecting it.”

“Well, I agree with you, Sir; it shows they haven’t a sense of gratitude towards their God for the blessing of food. At any rate, if they have, they give no one, even the heathen around them, to understand so. I don’t so much blame them as the higher authorities, who should, by precept and example, urge those under them to be at least consistent as professing Christians.”

“Poor young men!” said Mrs. Maurice; “they seem to care for nothing but enjoyment as long as this life lasts. They forget there’s something beyond the grave, which makes all earthly happiness unreal; but it’s all over the world, and I suppose will remain so till the end of time.”

* Scallions—literally water-women.

"I had an interesting talk with your Adjutant, on the way to Camp," said Mr. Huntly—"he hasn't, I find, as yet tasted the Waters of Life."

"I grieve to say, Sir," rejoined the Colonel, gravely, "that though as a rule, my lads are steady and well behaved, I don't think there's one of them with the slightest religious feeling. In some cases they respect it in others, but they'll have none of it themselves. I conduct the services on Sunday, and as I make it a parade, it's imperative on all to attend."

"Ah well, candidly, I think that's a mistake," replied the Clergyman; "coercion won't do; it's not advisable. Precept and example work far more good. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Mind I would not do away with Church parade altogether, but I would not insist upon the attendance of a man who stated that, though a Protestant, he took no pleasure in it, or that it was a mockery to him."

At this moment a clear burst of laughter rang out into the dark stilly air from the Mess-tent, and the voice of Smiley could be heard, on its cessation, loud in chaff hurled at some one, who answered him again in an angry excited manner.

"Hullo!" remarked the Colonel, "Smiley's funny to-night it seems; he's making merry at somebody's expense." Miss Maurice turned away her head in trepidation, and her heart beat vio-

lently, for she had recognized the voice of Gough in the angry tones that answered Smiley; and had a presentiment of coming evil. Her poor lover had been in no amiable state of mind when he had parted from her that evening, and she feared greatly that he would be only too successful in his attempts to drown all conviction, and drive away all care. Though she knew he was kind and good natured, on the whole; she was also perfectly well aware that he had a temper of his own, and she feared that if he gave way to it, it might lead him into danger, and be one of the greatest enemies to his ever attaining the peace of an inner life. Oh, how she loved him—this little woman. She had loved him, for some months past, unknown to any one; but she could not help feeling he was in danger, and her tender concern for him had only gone to add to her love. She blamed herself now for having betrayed herself into a confession of her love to him, but she had only told him the truth, and that truth had slipped out, before she knew it. Had she been living with a hope only in this world, she would never have dreamt of refusing to be his wife; but the question, “how can two walk together unless they be agreed?” was constantly in her mind, and she felt that, until the young man was of the same mind as herself and believed as she did, she would do wrong to marry him. But oh, how she hoped he would be changed; for then

she would willingly be his own for time and eternity. She was very unhappy now as she sat thinking of him, looking towards the Mess-tent, her chin leaning on her hand, and her brow pale and sad. One, she tenderly loved, had wounded her sensitive heart very greatly by his last harsh words to her, coupled with the assertion that he would have none of her religion. She felt for him, in his present unsettled state of mind, and a foreboding that something dire would arise out of it, took hold of her, and made her tremble.

"Mr. Smiley's a very thoughtless young man," remarked Mrs. Maurice, after a pause, "he will get into trouble some day I fear, unless he is more cautious."

"He's a careless fellow," added the Colonel, "rather be at any kind of fun, than attending to his work ; I've spoken to him seriously several times about it, but he thinks I've taken a dislike to him, and takes no notice whatever of my advice."

"I should think Mr. Gough was a smart Soldier, Sir," said Mr. Huntly.

"You are right ; he makes an excellent Adjutant ; works hard and zealously ; is a general favorite with his brother Officers, and liked by the men. He behaved very pluckily in a little affair in Burmah when poor Tudor was killed, and won everybody's confidence. He was put out rather, this evening, I saw—it's not usual with him."

“I’m afraid that was partly my fault, Colonel.” I spoke to him as earnestly as I could, and was led to hope that God would bless my words to his soul’s peace; but he said at last that he could not bear religion just now, under some existing circumstances, and begged me to cease urging him—I think his mind was somewhat disturbed.”

The Colonel gave an expressive look towards his wife and daughter, and was struck with the unusual paleness of Ada’s face. Guessing the cause, however, he thought it wiser to make no remark.

A moment afterwards, Smiley’s voice was again heard loud in chaff, and as before was succeeded by Gough’s angry tones, in which the words “hypocrite for no one” were plainly audible.

“Mr. Hillier is a very fine-looking man, is he not?” asked the Clergyman, wishing to divert the thoughts of the others from what was going on in the Mess-tent. “I should like him very much, did he not show himself to hold such a decided aversion to theology, as he calls religious feeling.”

“He is one of those who think the very name of religion ought to be mentioned only in whispers, in some quiet corner; never given out openly to the world,” answered the Colonel, “and yet, when poor Tudor was killed, Hillier was most bitterly affected on following him to the grave, and told me he wished he was as prepared for death, as the poor lad we were burying had been. But he’s not

the only one I've seen, Mr. Huntly, who when the awful example of a comrade's sudden death came upon them, lost their assumed indifference altogether, and became for a time thoughtful of a future state."

"I pity him very much indeed"—said Mrs. Maurice, "for I at least, know that at one time he was led to fear greatly for himself. He was very ill of sun-stroke; indeed Dr. Milton had hardly any hopes of his recovery. When I went to see him one day he told me he was very unhappy; and said, 'Oh Mrs. Maurice, do you think I shall be condemned? I fear eternal death; tell me something of it.' I tried, I remember, to show him the Lord's mercy, and read and prayed with him, and then he promised that if he lived he would try and serve God faithfully. Is it not dreadful to see and hear him now?"

"If he only knew how equal a right to salvation he has, as any of us; and accepted of it, how happy he would be," returned Mr. Huntly. "But I have no doubt he thinks to stave it off till the last moment. It is very sad."

Here an Orderly stepped up, and saluting, said that the Colonel's patternman had sent him to ask, if the Commanding Sahib's things had not better be packed at once, as they were to march early next morning.

"All right, Havildar!" replied the Colonel, in Hindostanee; "tell him to commence loading the

bandies. I think we had better leave the table to the servants now, my dear," turning to his wife. "They'd better get the packing over whilst they're wide awake. Perhaps Mr. Huntly would like to come in and read a Chapter before we smoke our cheroots."

Mr. Huntly of course most willingly complied, and when prayers were over, and the ladies, who had some packing to do, were bid good night to, he strolled out with the Colonel enjoying his pleasant conversation, and a good smoke.

As they walked up and down in the dark, but starry night, in front of the line of tents, they were startled by the unusual sound of angry voices proceeding from the Mess-tent, and uttered in tones which could leave no doubt but that there had been some serious quarrel. "Put me under arrest, will you ! no, you dare not !" Smiley was heard to say in furious wrath. "You're not such a fool—though you may be a hypocrite."

A crash of glass followed this outburst ; and then Gough's voice broke out in fiery retaliation.

"This is disgraceful—shameful !" said the Colonel, turning to his friend. "I wonder what the senior Officers are about that they don't interfere. If you'll excuse me for one moment, Sir, I'll go over and put a stop to this fracas at once."

Mr. Huntly quietly acquiesced, and the Colonel flinging away his cheroot, strode off in deep

displeasure towards the Mess-tent, looking every inch a Commandant.

As he entered at one side, Gough, his Adjutant, was going out at the other, but as he went, he faced about, and showed a countenance flushed scarlet with rage, and the Colonel, as he stood taken aback by the scene, saw him shake his fist threateningly at Smiley and heard him say passionately, "By Heaven, Smiley! I'll have full satisfaction for all these insults; and if you're not kicked out of the corps you disgrace, I'll take care you give me personal satisfaction, should it cost either of us his life, you ———"

CHAPTER X.

THE COLONEL'S DISPLEASURE.

THERE were only five Officers seated at the table when Gough left, and these were—Dillon, Hillier, Harris, O'Rourke, and Smiley. They did not see the Colonel at first, he had entered so unexpectedly ; and were beginning their remonstrances with poor Boots in no very gentle terms, when they were startled by the voice of the C. O.

“What is the meaning of all this, gentlemen ?” he commenced haughtily.

They all rose, and saluted immediately.

“I wish to know how, and with whom, this disgraceful disturbance arose,” continued the Colonel, advancing a pace, and folding his arms.

Smiley turned perfectly white in trepidation ; he had never seen the Colonel look so annoyed before, and he felt sure that grave consequences would ensue. The others all looked towards him, expecting that he would explain the matter for himself, but his lip only quivered, and he sunk down into his chair trembling. *

“Am I to get no answer ?” asked the Colonel, his brow growing darker.

“The whole thing has arisen from Mr. Smiley's foolishly chaffing, and insulting Mr. Gough, Sir,”

replied Dillon, promptly, "they were at hard words before we could stop them."

"And pray why did any of you permit it to begin? it is a disgrace to the Corps; why did none of you place the offenders in arrest? where are the Senior Officers?"

"They left the table long ago, Sir."

"Have *they* heard any of this?"

"No, Colonel. There was nothing spoken in anger in their presence," replied Hillier. "Both Mr. Smiley and Gough were so heated and enraged afterwards, that neither would listen to reason. The Adjutant ordered Mr. Smiley under arrest, but he refused to go, and became more excited."

"I shall enquire strictly into all this to-morrow morning," said the Colonel, with a severe frown, "meanwhile you, Mr. Smiley, will consider yourself under arrest, for conduct unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman; go to your tent immediately!"

Smiley began to sob piteously, thoroughly cowed, if not sobered. "Please Colonel—overlook—first offence—never, never—occur again."

"Will you go, Sir?" demanded the C. O., impatiently. "Oh the disgrace, Sir!—the disgrace—think of the disgrace," cried Smiley, in a fresh outburst of grief, and passing his hands over his hot-flushed brow—"I'll go at once, Sir—apologize to Gough—he'll shake hands I know—Oh Colonel."

"Leave the table at once, Sir ; and go to your tent !" thundered the Colonel—"or I'll send for a file of men to take you."

Smiley rose quietly, shivering and trembling all over. He had drank far more than was at all good for him, as his unsteady gait, and blood-shot eyes fully testified ; but as he reached the tent side he turned round to make one last appeal.

"Please don't put me under arrest, Colonel !" he implored.—" 'pon my honor, I'll never disgrace myself so—overlook please"—but the Colonel only motioned him away with impatience ; and he went—staggering and confused among the tent ropes and pegs—from under the bright glare of the lamps, into the silent darkness without.

"Gentlemen !" said the Colonel, advancing to the table. "I am painfully grieved and disgusted at this shameful state of things. Mr. Smiley is but a boy and ought not to have been permitted to remain at a table where he knew not how to behave. You will all have to attend at Orderly hour to-morrow morning to explain either your inability or your disinclination to put a stop to this fracas from the first. I shall not be partial to any one ; both Mr. Gough and Mr. Smiley are to be considered as under arrest, and I will appoint a Court of Inquiry to investigate this matter to-morrow. It's a disgrace to the Regiment, and an insult to the Company we have the honor to

serve. You will please to take over the duties of Adjutant, Mr. Dillon, while Mr. Gough is under arrest, and order the attendance of the whole of the Officers in my Office-tent at 10 o'clock. Good night," and the Colonel strode away from the tent; erect as a pike, and with a stern look of displeasure on his soldierly features.

He found Mr. Huntly on the spot where he had left him; and still smoking calmly.

"Come along, my dear Sir," said the soldier, taking the Clergyman's arm. "I'll show you where your tent is. I'm greatly put out by this night's affair."

Mr. Huntly made no reply, and they walked silently on till they reached the door of his tent.

"Good night!" said the Colonel.

"Good night, Sir!" replied Mr. Huntly, and so they parted.

We wont burden you, reader, with a long description of how this fracas was begun. Suffice it that Nerton, who had been seated next Smiley, had, entirely unsuspected by the others, been quietly urging the young man to say bitterly insulting things to Gough under the cover of what is generally called chaff, plying him at the same time in an apparent spirit of generosity with various exciting beverages. Gough, as we have already

seen, was in no very calm or long-suffering state of mind. He was in no very pleasant temper all the evening, and these insults, in the shape of chaff, teased and provoked him greatly, and caused him to retaliate, rather sharply from time to time.

The older Officers had heard merely the chaff. It was far too common at a Mess-table to excite any surprise among those who frequently sat round it. It stung the person at whom it was levelled rather severely, but appeared perfectly inoffensive in the ears of those around; and it was not till the Captains, with the exception of Nerton, had retired, that Smiley's insinuations began to be insolent to a degree; however when the former Officer perceived that a quarrel was almost inevitable, he also rose and retired.

Ere this however, on the strength of his having been the first to wound the tiger, the capture of which had crowned their day's sport, Nerton, had *generously* treated all his brother Officers to Champagne cup. He had mixed the decoction himself at a side table; and had gone round with the servant who held the tray of tumblers, and filled a bumper for every one with his own hand.

No one however had noticed that he had quietly, and with a steady hand, poured something out of a little phial into a tumbler destined for Gough, and which the latter, without hesitation, had drank the contents of, to the dregs.

The Boots of the Regiment, now unrestrained by any fear of those whose interference he cared for, and greatly excited by the various liquors he had imbibed, became still more insolent in his cutting speeches to the Adjutant; he galled him by throwing out hints that a certain lady would certainly never accept him unless he became a "New-light," as he expressed it, and insinuated that Gough was trying hard to become pious, in order to win her. This would have been trying to the temper in any case, but at present it made our hero lose all control over his own, and his passionate answers only provoked a fresh sally from the Ensign, whose last words so maddened him, that he had seized a tumbler and flung it at his tormentor's head.

The missile missed its mark; but the impetuous act had slightly calmed him, and he left the tent uttering the indignant threat, which had reached the ears of his Commanding Officer.

CHAPTER XI.

SMILEY WAITS TILL TO-MORROW.

POOOR Smiley, his head dizzy from the effects of mixed potations, and his heart thumping under his waistcoat, on account of the scrape he had got himself into, went meandering blindly among the tents of the camp, barking his legs against pegs, and running up full tilt against tightened ropes, which seemed to enclose him on all sides like a huge net.

After several ineffectual attempts to find out where he was, he contented himself by clinging to a tent-rope, and waiting till his eyes got more accustomed to the darkness around.

The night was very black : there was no moon, and huge fleecy clouds were hanging over head, shutting out even what light the stars might have given. One or two of the latter dimly twinkled near the horizon unclouded, but shed little or no light over this part of the world at any rate. For a large camp like this one, the silence within it was startling enough. Even the pariah dogs were quiet; perhaps it was because there was no moon to bay at, but at all events there was not a bark to be heard within the camp. Some three miles off, a prowling jackal or two struck up a series of short,

but loud howls, which another of the tribe no sooner heard, than he capped by fearfully prolonged bedlam-like yells. Oh, those disturbers of balmy sleep in India! London criers, organ grinders, and German bands are only whisperers compared to them. When they approach in force, and have found some rich offal, only sufficient to make a meal for one of them, all the inmates of a Lunatic Asylum turned loose could not make such an ear-piercing series of yells. The first long-drawn howl has been compared to the words "Dead Hindu," spun out to the longest and highest "breve," ever heard while the nearest jackal sharply makes a howl like "Where!" and is answered by screams resembling the words "here! here!" But these nuisances were now at too great a distance from the camp to disturb the peace of any animal within it, and poor hiccuping Boots only heard the howls because he was wide awake, and was standing silent too.

As he stood gazing dreamily round him, leaning up against a tent rope, he thought he heard voices inside the tent near him, and he wondered who they could be, thus in conversation, at so late an hour. He could not help hearing a few words, but they were spoken in Hindoostanee, of which he knew very little, and uttered almost in whispers; nevertheless he caught the meaning of them occasionally.

"Will you do it or not?"

"What, Sahib! this is no easy business you want me to do."

"But think; if you will do it, you will be well rewarded. I've explained to you how there's no danger whatever in it."

"But Sahib; suppose the Adjutant Sahib should"—

"Hush———what are you doing?" said the other voice;—"did not I tell you not to mention names? you called yourself my *Goolam** just now, and said you would obey me with your head and eyes, and be *numuk-hala†*, but you are afraid to do this business."

There was no answer to this; Smiley listened intently, for he was struck by the earnest tones of what he knew was an Officer's voice, and though he hated eaves-dropping, he couldn't go away without trying to hear more.

"Will you do it?"

"Pardon me, Sahib—pardon me; I'll do anything but that."

"Now look here, you've done it before; and if I chose I could have you hanged for it. Why not do it again?"

"Oh don't ask me, Sahib; let me off; pardon me!"

"Will you do it or not?"

"No, Sahib; it cannot be done by my hands."

* Slave.

† Faithful to salt.

"Then to-morrow morning, I take you before the Colonel, and charge you with the murder of Tudor Sahib; you cannot escape; my pistol is loaded, and I will shoot you like a dog if you move."

Smiley trembled with a horrible apprehension; he was beginning to recognize the voice of the last speaker, for it had been louder, while uttering the threat.

It was Nerton's voice!

Poor Smiley stood rooted to the spot. Had he been in his sober senses, the words he had heard would have surprised him, but they terrified him now; and the cold drops burst out over his forehead, and trickled down his smooth cheeks, while he stood perfectly still, his lips parted, and his eyes dilated to their uttermost.

Nerton's threat was followed by a couple of sharp clicks; at the sound of which Smiley's lips closed spasmodically.

"*Ni Sahib—ni Sahib—tyro—tyro!*" was uttered in a wretched beseeching voice—more appalling from the speaker saying it in an under tone, "Don't kill me—I'll be your slave—I'll do anything for you."

Smiley stayed to hear no more—he glided away from the tent, feeling cautiously along the rope; and as his eyes had now become accustomed to the darkness around, he fled like a startled deer along the front of the whole line of Officers' tents—and

made for a little *rowty*, in which he saw a glimmering light. As he neared it, however, a sharp challenge of "Hookum dar!" rang out into the night air—and he heard the musket *tell*, as the sentry brought it down to the "charge."

This brought him to a stand-still at once, and he gave the usual answer, but in such a hesitating, trembling tone that the suspicions of the sentry were aroused, and, after challenging again, he walked towards him in order to identify him. He was a huge, tall, fierce-looking fellow; and his long jappanned hat with the thick cockade on its summit made him appear a perfect giant to Smiley's eyes, so without a word he suffered himself to be collared, and led into the tent.

"*Abbah! chota Sahib!*"* cried the grenadier, releasing his prisoner, when he discovered his identity. "I didn't see you Smiley, Sahib," he went on in Hindoostanee, and humbly saluting—"I thought it might be somebody else."

Smiley tried to take it coolly; he walked over to the oil light that was burning in a little clay vessel, and began to light his cheroot.

"*Sahar jathay, Sahib?*" (where are you going, Sir?) asked the sentry respectfully.

"*Hough Sahib derag—rusta maloom ney*"—replied Boots in his broken Hindoostanee. He

* *Hullo*—the little Sahib.

meant to say he wanted to go to the Adjutant's tent, but did not know the way.

"Hi Buldar Khan!" cried the sentry, stirring up a sound sleeper, who lay on the broad of his back, snoring through a handkerchief, which was spread over his face to keep mosquitoes off. "*Hi jee; ooto! ooto!*" (get up—get up,) and the sepoy began punching his comrade in the side with the butt of his musket, to add force to his words.

The latter resented this rather rough appeal to his senses in no very gentle terms; but after he had managed to sit up, and had scratched his closely-cropped skull, rubbed his eyes, and groaned, and cleared his throat, he caught a glimpse of the Officer's jacket, and was on his feet with jack-in-the-box-like rapidity.

The tall grenadier explained to him, that the "*chota Sahib*" had lost his way, and required to be guided to his tent.

A hitch or two to his trowsers; a slight adjustment of his belts, and a rapid double shuffle into his *chupples* or sandals, and the now thoroughly awakened sepoy was ready in a moment. He followed him out of the guard tent, and very cautiously in all his subsequent turnings, assisted greatly in keeping the right way by the peaking sound made by the aforesaid *chupples*, as his guide strode dimly in front of him, ever and anon

warning him of a treacherous peg or rope by the expression, "*Kubber dar Sahib*," (look out, Sir.)

Gough's tent was reached at last, and dismissing the sepoy, Smiley went in and seated himself in a heap on the side of the bed. He tried to collect his thoughts, but Colonels, arrests, hints of murders committed, murderous threats, and pistols cocking were tumbling, confused over each other in his muddled brain; and refused to be formed into any solid shape or order. He thought he must have been dreaming—and as he sat mechanically puffing at his cheroot which wouldn't draw, and hiccuping, and looking about him—his eye fell on a brandy bottle standing on a little teapoy near the tent-pole. He got up and clutched it, and then looked about for a tumbler, but there was nothing of the kind about, except that which held the dirty oil, on the surface of which a dim light floated on a cork-raft. His search, however, brought him close to Gough's bed, and he perceived that worthy stretched on his back with his jacket still on, and snoring audibly.

Smiley, seeing there was no water to be had, contented himself with a gulp of neat brandy from the bottle and then seated himself confusedly on his bed again. "Poor fellow!" said he, apostrophising Gough, "I treated you—*hic*—very badly—but I didn't mean it. I wish you'd make friends—I say Gough, old fellow!" he added in a louder tone.

Gough rolled over heavily on his bed.

"Alright—alright—orrer my horse!" he thought he was being awakened for parade.

"Listen to me, old fellow," continued Smiley; I'm deuced—*hic*—ashamed of myself—I'm a perfect ass. I've behaved like a brute to you—and I can't—*hic*—go to sleep without 'pologising."

"Hold your jaw!" muttered Gough, savagely.

"Ah, don't, old chap—don't now; I can't sleep—I'm too much cut up. I'll go mad I think. I tell you what it is, my dear fellow, I deserved to be well kicked, and I wish you do it."

"I wish you'd shut up!"

"I can't, Gough. I want you to forgive me; I swear I'm confoundedly vexed with myself. I didn't know what I was doing."

Gough rolled over again, and turned his back, emphatically, upon Smiley.

"Settle it i'the mor'ing"—he muttered half asleep.

"But I want it settled now, old fellow"—said Boots, coming over to his neighbour's cot, and speaking very softly. "You said you'd thrash me or pay me out or something—*hic*—for the way I insulted you—well, I know I deserve a precious good hiding—but I'm awfully cut up about it—I did not know what I was saying. It was all the liquor, I took, went to my head, and made me so quarrelsome. However, my dear fellow, it'll—*hic*—never happen again."

"Alsrene! go sleep," replied the drowsy one.

"I know I hurt you very much by my thoughtless slang, Gough; but I didn't mean it. I was screwed, I'm sure. It was all that fellow Nerton; he put me up to it—and, I'll tell you what—I heard him threatening to shoot somebody, for not doing something horrible—I don't know what it was—but I heard him cock his pistol; and the other fellow howled murder, and I bolted in an awful funk—what d'ye think of it?"

A loud snore was his only answer.

"He's awfully tired," murmured Boots; "and I wish he'd wake up and forgive me; never mind, I dare say he'll forget all about it in the morning. A light conscience makes—*hic*—a heavy sleeper; I wish mine was as light—but he ought to get to bed properly—Good night, old fellow!" and he seized Gough's hand and shook it.

"G'night"—muttered the sleeper unconsciously, as Boots retired to his own cot, and began to undress slowly, "iss allri."

Poor Smiley, as he sat there, mechanically stripping, began to try to bring his thoughts into some discipline, and partly succeeded. He recollected in the first place that he had got into dire disgrace, and that he was under arrest. Arrest! The very word was a torture to him, and he felt what a pang his own dear mother would feel, if she heard he had disgraced himself. He now remembered how, on

the eve of his departure from home, that loving mother had knelt with him, and asked Almighty God to bless her youngest darling. He called to mind how she had wept over him, and implored him to give his heart to God—to a higher than earthly power—when he was far away from those who loved him, and yearned for him. She had told him that, if he made a friend of Him who sticketh closer than a brother, his heart would ever be at peace, and he would find a consolation and comfort even in the deepest trials, and he was miserable as her words came back to him now. He thought of the way he had spurned her advice—how he had mocked at religion, and tried to drive its convictions away—and he trembled as he felt how false he had been to all his promises to her, and to the dictates of his own conscience.

“I’ll turn over a new leaf, with God’s help,” he thought sadly. “It wont do to go on in this way always; I know it’s not right, and if I’m going to change, I’ll change at once; but I haven’t my mother now, and I’m sure it’ll be a hard matter—never mind, I’ll try—ugh, how dry my throat is.”

He got up; seized the brandy-bottle again, and took another pull at its contents.

“Bugles at three in the morning; well, I must turn in, and try to sleep; if my mother was here, she’d pray with me, I know; and give me some

comfort—never mind, I'll begin to turn over a new leaf *to-morrow morning*—hang me, if I don't !”

TO-MORROW ! put it off till *to-morrow* ! poor soul, like thousands of your brothers and sisters around you, put off what you know to be your immediate duty, but what feels unpleasant—put it off till some future time—a future you know as little of, as did the worm you trod under foot just now—a future you would fain think as little of as you can, on account of its terrible uncertainty to you, and every one around you. *Put it off till to-morrow—not now*—TO-MORROW !

CHAPTER XII.

EVIDENCE—PRESUMPTIVE AND
CORROBORATIVE.

BULDAR Khan, the sepoy who had guided Smiley to his tent, was standing sentry the next morning at the quarter-guard tent, between the hours of 2 and 4 A. M. After he thought that he had been posted nearly an hour, he went in to look at the Drum-Major's clock, which hung from a nail on the tent-pole; and found it still wanted a quarter to three. He proceeded however at once to arouse the Drummer of the guard, who, with a Drummer's usual alacrity, jumped up in a moment, and went off to wake up his brothers in drums.

Buldar Khan, after another look at the clock, slowly laid aside his musket, and, taking up the *glurrie*-mallet, gave the gong a blow, full in the centre, which pealed over the whole camp, but ere he had struck it a second or third time, the bugles rang out the *assembly* from different quarters, and, almost immediately after, the fifes and drums rattled away at the "General Assembly," waking up every one in the camp, whose sleep was a natural one.

It was rather a chilly morning for this part of India; pleasant enough to Europeans, but rather too cold for the Asiatic, as the lascars evidently

thought ; for they shivered a little, and had their heads and ears well-muffled in their cloths, and carried their brown *cumblies* with them.

The sepoy's shivered slightly too, as they turned out, and began tugging on their uniform, and buckling their belts and knapsacks ; but they soon got warmed, and began chattering with, and chaffing, one another in loud guffaws. Some of them assisted the lascars to strike the tents, and, very shortly, huge piles of canvas were seen stretched on the spot where, a few minutes before, they had stood so proudly. The pegs were knocked about ; hauled out of the hard ground, and thrown in heaps to be placed in gunny-bags, and borne to the next halt on camels. The servants might be seen hurrying backwards and forwards from their little camp fires, getting " Masta's caffee ready ;" while the Ghorawallahs were saddling their horses, and the grass-cutters tying up the stable apurtenances in huge bundles, to be carried on their bare heads.

Now while Mrs. Maurice's " palkee" bearers were coming swinging their now empty burden along to the tent door, and girding up their loins for their journey—while the ladies, one in a dressing gown, and the other in a riding habit, were sipping the hot matutinal tea—while the Colonel was buckling on his sword ; and Mr. Huntly (in the act of buttoning his braces) came to his tent door

to look around him—though to be sure it was still too dark to see very easily—there arose an unusual kind of murmur among the Officers' tents; then a buzzing hum of many excited voices, and cries of dismay; and a servant breathless with some terrible news—his eyes almost starting out of his head—rushed over to the Colonel's tent, and bursting unceremoniously into the middle of it, cried.

"Sar! Sar! oh—oh—my poo—r masta, Sar—masta done die, Sar—ei—ei—oh—somebody kill'im my masta, Sar—what I do?—ei—oh—ei—oh—ei—o—h."

"What's all this about?" asked the Colonel, putting down the cup he had been raising to his lips.

"Ab—ah! Sar—Sar! Sar—Sar! my poo—r young masta—blood all coming—oh—masta—come see Sar!"

At this moment the voice of Dillon was heard calling hurriedly to the Colonel from outside.

Both the ladies had turned deadly pale on hearing the servant's words; and their sickening apprehensions were increased, when they heard Mr. Dillon say to the Colonel at the tent door.

"A most shocking affair has taken place, Sir—the poor young fellow's dead, I think. For God's sake come over, and see what can be done."

"Who's dead? speak low; the ladies are inside."

Dillon bent forward, and said, almost in a whisper—" *Poor young Smiley, Sir !*"

The Colonel strode over with his new Adjutant to the ex-one's tent, without another word ; but his face was pale, and his lips ashy white.

The dim oil light was spluttering in its tumbler, and shedding a dismal glare on Smiley's cot.

It was true !

There lay Smiley—*dead*—and cold, and stiff.

The body, clad in long drawers, and a short muslin night shirt, was half-leaning on the bed, as though it had fallen back on it. The cold hard right hand grasped the hilt of a sword with a death-grip, and hung nearly touching the floor ; while the left was bent, with the fingers extending over the chest. The eyes were closed ; and from the corner of the mouth—which was open, the jaw having dropped--there was a thin stream of dark, coagulated blood. There were no external marks of violence to be discovered at first sight, but there were a few thick clots dabbled over the chest of the shirt near the fingers of the hand.

Poor lad ! *to-morrow* ; alas ! its light never shone to gladden thee !

" Get all these people away, Mr. Dillon," said the Colonel, hoarsely, and as composedly as he could. " Sound the ' halt ' and ' no parade,' and let the Doctor be sent for at once."

Dillon was off in an instant, after driving a whole

crowd of dark excited faces pell-mell out of one door, while some of the other Officers, with bloodless faces and trembling voices, came crowding into the other.

All this time where was Gough? Why, lying upon his cot, sleeping soundly. The Colonel went round to wake him up, but started back to perceive that there was blood on the pillow and bed-sheets. A fearful suspicion flashed across him—a dreadful thought—which was further aroused by seeing a naked sword stained with blood, lying on the rug at the side of the cot.

The Colonel looked up and saw Major Hearty at his side. He too had quickly drawn his conclusions. "Horrible work, this, Maurice; has there been a quarrel do you know?"

"Yes; I heard him threaten that poor boy last night in a fearful rage; and yet he sleeps very calmly."

"It's unnatural."

"Very! Hearty, I give you my word, I would have thought Gough the last man to have done this, and the other a mere lad too: it's cruel—cowardly!"

"Hadn't we better waken him, and see what he will say for himself."

"Very well, do so."

The Major advanced to the cot, and shook Gough; but he still slept soundly on.

"Rouse yourself, Mr. Gough, and don't play

the fool," cried the Colonel, haughtily, thinking his ex-Adjutant was foxing sleep. "This is too serious an affair to make a farce of."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the Major; "perhaps he is"—and he interrupted himself, and only placed his hand over Gough's lips—"no, thank God, it's not so bad as that."

"It will be still worse for him, I fear, Hearty; shake him well."

The Major did so, and Gough gave a little groan, but didn't open his eyes, or give further signs of waking.

"Poor fellow! he's weary; had he not better be allowed to sleep on, Colonel? It seems a pity to wake him."

The speaker was Nerton, who had come quietly up, and was standing by his Commanding Officer, with his pale face deadly white.

"Ah, good morning, Nerton; this is a shocking business; is it not? Look at that," pointing to the sword.

"I noticed it, Sir; but is it his?"

A glance satisfied all parties as to the answer; an empty steel scabbard, with belts attached, leaned against the foot of Gough's bed, while another—a leather one—empty too, was on the floor near the foot of the corpse.

"Here's the Doctor!" cried two or three voices, "give him light, and room."

Dr. Milton stepped up to Smiley's bed, and took a long grave look at the body and its position, with his head on one side. Then he laid his hand gently over the mouth ; passed it with a quick motion over the left side, felt the skin in different parts, and looked for the wound.

He soon discovered it—a small puncture near the left breast.

“Humph ! gone—quite gone—dead these three hours—bled to death, internally—poor soul, poor soul !”

“Are you quite sure there's no hope, Doctor ?” asked the Colonel.

The surgeon was too much grieved, and awe-struck to be piqued at this question. He lifted the poor lad's arm : it was stiff and clammy, and dropped again by his side like a lump of lead. He then raised the eye-lid and looked for a moment at the glassy glaring eye-balls.

“There's no hope—not a breadth in him—sad affair—very, very sad—doubt no doubt—humph—who did it ?”

Here, heads and eyes were involuntarily turned towards the other cot.

The Doctor went over to it.

“My goodness—my goodness—more blood—see it all—ran him through—it's too clear—humph—not hurt is he,” for his practised eye and ear told him that Gough was alive at any rate.

“Not hurt I think, Doctor, but sleeping soundly and unaccountably, through it all.”

The little M. D. gently took Gough's wrist, and, bending over him, looked into his tired face.

“Aye—sound 'sleep—aint surprised though—over-excitement would do it—pulse easy—head hot—temples throbbing—better sleep on—let him alone—humph—sad fellow—sad fellow !”

So they let the poor unconsciously suspected one lie on his cot, sound asleep ; in spite of all the row that went on around him.

It was momentarily getting lighter, and the chilliness of the air was gradually decreasing. The tents were being pitched again ; the horses were being unsaddled, and tied to their picquet ropes, and the Mess servants were busy getting “Chota Hasree” ready. The cause of their unexpected halt was in every one's mouth.

The sepoy spoke almost in whispers about it ; and white, brown, and black faces became bloodless, when it was gradually becoming known, that *Guff Sahib* was implicated in the *Chota Sahib's* murder.

Some believed this, and some doubted it ; and among the latter was Shaik Rustum, Gough's patternman, who had been detailed for duty that day. As he stood near the guard *Rowtee*, with a knot of men, who were discussing the awful topic, he was loud in his opinions of his patron's innocence.

"*Juthee bath—tumam juth*—(false word, altogether false.) My Sahib would never do it."

"Nevertheless, his sword is lying there, covered with blood," said a fine young lance-naigue, "and there were words between the two Sahibs last night."

"Gough Sahib's like a lion when he's angry," muttered a dirty looking fellow, taking a round snuff box out of his hat, "I don't wonder at his doing it."

Rustum bent a look of severe contempt on the speaker.

"What! *you* speak of Gough Sahib like that. He might have punished you till you died, for *your* bad conduct; you're not worthy to press his foot with your forehead. He was too good to you, you PIG'S COUSIN!!!!"

Here Bagshot who was also on guard burst out with "and I wish you was in the Chota Sahib's place."

"*Chup gumarr*"* replied the other, promptly.

Bagshot retaliated again; and a regular wordy contest ensued, in the midst of which Lieutenant Dillon came up.

The drummer and the dirty man slunk away, but Rustum stood his ground.

"Can't you make less noise here!" cried Dillon,

as he advanced. "If you want to give *galee** to each other, you'd better ask for leave and go to the jungles with the other *janwars*."†

He was evidently put out—this newly-fledged Adjutant.

A little thing warmed his temper now. Though generally rather easy with the men, the importance of his new position rose before his mind—and he 'would hold a tight hand over things now, as Adjutant,' he thought.

Shaik Rustum advancing with a salute, stated that he wished he could be relieved, as the Sahib that had stood to him ever since he enlisted, in the light of both father and mother, was in trouble, and he thought he might be of service to him.

"What's the good of your going, and bothering Gough Sahib now."

"I wont bother him indeed, Sir ; if you'll kindly let me go."

"Oh you will bother him, I know," replied Dillon, hastily, turning on his heel, "let one word suffice ; you can't be relieved." And off he went.

He met the Colonel at his own tent-door. "Ah, Dillon I was just about to send for you : put a Court of Inquest in orders immediately, as well as a Committee of Adjustment on the poor lad's things, and bye the bye—we ought— it's not pleasant, but

* Abuse.

† Animals.

necessary, I suppose, in this case—the evidence is so clear—put poor Mr. Gough into close arrest, and,”—here he dropped his voice, “you may place a Havildar’s guard over him at once.”

Dillon’s face blanched ; he hadn’t thought of all these things as yet.

“Very well, Sir,” he replied, greatly agitated, “Who shall I put upon the Court of Inquest?”

“Haven’t you a Roster? look at that, and act by it?”

“All right, Colonel—do you want us all at your Office at ten?”

“No, I’ll cancel that ; it’s useless now—it will all come out in time at—*at the trial*, I suppose. But I’ll tell you what, can’t you get one of the Officers to go and sit with the poor fellow, and let him know, at any rate when he awakes, how matters stand with him ; it would be kind I think. And look here, whoever goes, warn him to mind what’s said to him, as his evidence may be needed hereafter.”

Dillon saluted, and marched off.

He met O’Rourk, mooning dispiritedly about with a very sad face, and smelling already strongly of brandy.

“Oh Jack, you’re the very man I want,” he began, “would you mind going and sitting in Gough’s tent, and keeping the poor fellow company?”

“What, is he awake?”

“No, I don’t think so, and old Milton^{*} says he ought to be allowed to sleep on : so you mustn’t rouse him, Jack.”

“If it wasn’t for that”—and he hesitated.

“For what?”

“For the other poor chap in the death-sleep. Och, I can’t stand being sated in front of a poor comrade’s corpse, and I never could see the fun of a wake. Poor, poor Boots, and he was so well and happy yesterday. I say Dillon, d’ye think Gough did it?”

“’Pon my word, Jack ; things look like it ; if he didn’t, who did ? He threatened him last night at any rate. But I think you’ll come in as member on poor Smiley’s Committee of Adjustment ; so keep sober.”

“All right, old fellow ; I’m as sober as a Judge, but mortal down, in the mouth ; and faith I’m likely to be more down, if I go and sit there. Och murder, I never thought Gough would do it, and I don’t think so either.”

“You’d better go at once Jack, and I’ll send you over some breakfast from Mess—what time would”——

“Breakfast is it? oh then indade you needn’t trouble yourself ; for I can’t ate a morsel—I could drink though.”

“You’ve spoilt your appetite, liquoring up already.”

"Not a bit of it, what'll you stand?"

"Beer?"

"Aye, let's have beer, and I'll go and sit with him as long as you like."

"And remember, Jack, you'll have to give evidence about it, if he confesses anything to you; so heed well his manner, and every word he says."

O'Rourke's face suddenly grew red with wrath.

"Oh come now; you want me to do the spy, do you? to act the detective, upon one of my best chums too. Thank you for nothing. I thought you were rather liberal with your liquor; but I'm not so far gone as all that, at any rate. Get some one else to do your dhirty work; I shant, not for gallons of POTYEEN!" and the irritated Irishman went away savagely, with hands in his pockets.

Dillon then dropped into Nerton's tent. He was startled a little bit here, for he found pale-face deep over his Bible, and he'd never seen him so before. He couldn't resist a smile.

"You all seem to have turned good to-day, Josh," he began quietly, laying his hand on the back of Nerton's chair. "There's Hillier almost praying aloud. Well you know,

"When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be,"

"When the devil was well, &c."

"It's no day for your jokes, Dillon."

"Ah—I know it's not, my dear Josh; and I

was most serious. But look here; the Colonel wants one of us to go and sit in Gough's tent. Would you mind doing so—you can read your good book there as well as here, you know."

"Can't you go yourself?"

"No, I've lots of other things to do."

"Then I wont go. I've no fancy for charging a poor comrade with murder,—and really he may not be——what if he's touched in the brain?"

"Gough mad!—ridiculous!—he's as sensible as you or I."

"I don't know that; Milton said these shocking crimes were generally done in temporary insanity. No man in his senses would murder a poor lad like him. And I've no wish to test Gough's sanity besides."

"You're afraid of him, eh?"

"Well—yes; to tell the truth I am, Dillon. He's a strong fellow in his senses; what would he be without them? Besides, its deuced unpleasant to be seated between the murdered and the murderer for any time. No, I thank you, I wont go."

Dillon went out, without whistling or saying another word, greatly chagrined. He liked poor Gough well enough, and would have sat with him himself, but that he had a good deal of other work to do, which would interfere. He did not know that he had applied to the two extremes—Gough's greatest friend, and worst enemy.

"Pooh!"—he muttered, as he walked out into the sun again. "I don't see why they should object. That book he was reading has not made *him* pleasant to deal with any way, but no matter,

"Let each man learn to know himself
To gain that knowledge, &c."

"Mr. Dillon, I believe."

It was Mr. Huntly who spoke. He overtook Dillon as he was rounding a corner, and was rather breathless.

The new Adjutant bowed, and the clergyman went on.

"I am Colonel Maurice's guest, and he told me he wanted somebody to sit in Mr. Gough's tent to keep the poor man company. I begged as a favor to be permitted to do so, and the Colonel kindly acquiesced, saying, however, that I had better let you know of it."

"Oh that's all right then, Sir: do you purpose going at once?"

"The sooner the better, I think. Will you be good enough to point out the tent to me, Mr. Dillon?"

The Adjutant glanced at the fair, good-natured, but sorrowful face, and the stalwart figure before him, and, delighted to find some one to do what two of Gough's brother Officers refused to do for him, he showed him the tent. Mr. Huntly bowed again, and was soon seated at the little

teapoy between the two sleepers, looking seriously at both. He sat not long, however, before he pulled from his pocket a little book with a well known limp black cover, and began not only reading it, but studying it.

Meanwhile, what did Miss Maurice think of all this?

Poor girl! to her the sad business of the morning was like some terrible wound or blow. Her father, on coming back from the scene of the murder, had whispered that poor Mr. Smiley had been killed during the night in his tent—had fought a duel, it was thought; but he never mentioned by whom, it was suspected, he had been killed. To her, however, everything seemed plain, and we all know also how prone we are to think the very worst of things, when trouble comes upon us. Ada knew that Mr. Smiley and Gough occupied the same tent, and she also knew that they had parted in anger on the previous night. And now when her father, in intended kindness towards her, hid from her the fact that it was her lover who was supposed to have committed the crime; though she tried hard to dissuade herself, every thing seemed so palpable, so horribly patent to her mind, that she actually trembled for him; for him whom she loved so earnestly, that she thought it was only showing her weakness to suspect him.

She was a brave-hearted sanguine girl, but in spite of all her attempts to bear up against it, she had turned ghastly white, and had fainted away in the arms of her trembling mother.

Mrs. Maurice was greatly shocked : her daughter had told her all—told her of the young man's proposal, and her answer ; and had not hidden from her how much she loved him nevertheless. So she was of course at no loss to see a reason for Ada's fainting. In her agitation, she could do but little to rouse the poor girl ; but the Ayah, by dint of cold water and scent, brought her young "Missey" to, after a little.

How pretty she looked as she lay back, panting in her easy chair—pretty, even in her extreme paleness. Her long brown lashes, wet with the water that had been sprinkled on her face, swept her cheeks, as she rested with closed eyes, and tried to calm herself. A thick luxuriant plait of her beautiful hair had tumbled from its fastening, and was hanging, dripping too, far down over the back of the chair. Her pallid lips were parted, and trembled as the little sighs welled forth from her heart, and her white hands were clasped tightly together in her lap.

"Mamma darling !" she murmured ; "What have I done!—is it my fault? Could I not have saved him from this?"

"No, my child," returned Mrs. Maurice, gently

smoothing back her hair, and applying eau-de-cologne to her white forehead. “I do thank God that you had the strength to say, and do what you did. My poor Ada, I know you love him very very much; but my child, when he does not love God, or care to please him, you could never be happy with him as long as he continued keeping away from Jesus. ‘Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers,’ Saint Paul says.”

“Will you read something to me, mamma, please; some of those lovely comforting Psalms? I will to try think of higher than earthly things.”

Mrs. Maurice rose, and getting her Bible, sat quietly down beside her daughter, and began reading.

Ah, if Gough could only have believed how much this dear girl loved him, body and soul, he would never have ceased trying to keep from doing anything to grieve *her*; but if the poor man had known and believed, reader, how great—how immeasurable—was God’s love for him, even for him, would he not try all the harder never to offend against *Him*? Whether he was the perpetrator or not of this sad deed, will be shown very shortly; but at any rate, the circumstantial evidence against him was very clear and plain, and there is no doubt but that his conduct and words on the previous evening, justified everybody’s present suspicions that he had,

on meeting poor Smiley in his tent, insisted on a duel then and there, and had easily overcome him. You, however, who have been let into the deep secret of Captain Josiah Nerton, will easily perceive that his plan was apparently succeeding—that his rival Gough seemed now to have little or no hopes of ever making Miss Maurice his wife. Was he not under the stigma of the law, and the Company's Articles of War? And was not the nature of the crime, and the punishment most likely to ensue, quite sufficient to destroy all Gough's hopes? Would not she try to cease remembering him, whom she could never call to mind without a shudder of horror? Nerton thought things had turned out very well for him; much better than if Gough had died quietly out of the way, for he had heard of some women's hearts being buried for ever with the one they loved, and this was by no means a pleasant thought to him. But now matters were entirely different. A public death—a just death for a damning deed imputed—a death which is one of the most awful and humiliating, it was now no doubt to be Gough's fate to suffer. She would only do her very utmost to forget him, and no doubt be glad to receive the love of some one else, deemed far more worthy. So far, so good; and now Nerton knowing, as he did, that she would marry none but a professing believer, intended to become one very shortly.

He knew that the garrison they were shortly to occupy was a large one, and that there were a number of marriageable men in it too ; men who wanted to be married, but couldn't be, because there was either no young lady to choose from, or the two or three that remained, were not to their liking ; but when he thought of Ada Maurice and her attractions, he felt, that if he wished to succeed, he must be prompt in letting her see some change in him. There were, no doubt, some religious young men in Sandybad who would soon make her acquaintance, and proved dangerous to his hopes, but it would be his fault now, he thought, if he didn't at least win her esteem by affecting piety. All this he was thinking of when Dillon found him perusing his Bible, which he had taken from his desk with the intention of getting some phrases by heart. As he read on, however, something seemed to trouble and pain him. The question flashed across him, that though he might deceive others, could he entirely deceive himself. He had been well brought up, this Josiah Nerton ; had received a sound orthodox education, and had had the tenets of Christianity early drummed into him, but he had privately really never thought much of God, much less ever really prayed to Him. On the contrary he tried his best to doubt everything about God and a future existence, as he imagined these matters in no degree patent to his senses and

reason. He succeeded very well in doubting, but even the most hardened conscience has its stings sometimes, and now he began to think that if there *was* a future state—if there *was* a just God who would omnipotently judge the world hereafter—if there *was* anything, he could not exactly define, beyond the dark curtain of death, was he likely to be bettered or worsted? If there *was* a place on the other side of the grave, destined for the souls of those who did evil while living, was all this plotting and sin worth the terrible risk he ran? Suddenly and fiercely this man shut up the book that he felt condemned him, and with a curse flung it into his open desk.

“Tutt!” “he muttered,” I mustn’t get reading that sort of thing; it’ll make a gaby of me; no man could get on in the world if he believed all the nonsense there’s in that book. I shant anyway. I shall get on very well in the religious line, I dare say, without studying *that*. I must only notice what others say, and follow suit. I may be as good as any of them yet; and if I’m not, it wont be my fault—but *the devil’s*, if there’s such a person. But, hang it, I can’t read *that*!” He went striding about his tent for a little, in an unsettled manner, and then looking at his watch, began to dress in order to attend the Inquest for which he had been detailed as a Member.

Meanwhile, Mr. Huntly had been quietly seated

between the poor murdered lad and the suspected murderer, taking real comfort from those pages so distasteful to the mind of Nerton, while a sentry paced slowly up and down in front of the tent door, ever and anon looking in to see that his charge was safe.

The Clergyman had been seated for about an hour, when the Hospital Assistants, accompanied by Doctor Milton, came over to remove the corpse to the Hospital tents, in one of which the inquest was to be held.

“How do?” whispered the Doctor. “Come to—to take it away—wont have the inquest here—doesn’t matter—everybody has seen it—position and all—I advised it—better for *him* too—humph, sleeping still?”

“Yes, and very heavily too.”

“Ah! all the better—mind disturbed—wants rest—been talking; eh?—in his sleep?”

“Not a word.”

“Hump; he’ll wake soon—but don’t rouse him—if brain’s affected—sleep’s good.”

They wrapped and rolled the ghastly body of the poor lad in the bed-sheets, straining the stiffened hand, holding the sword, close to the side; and then, not without some fuss, bore it gently away.

The Court assembled, and the proceedings began at once. The Doctor made a more careful examination of the state of the corpse, and disco-

vered some slight blue marks about the throat—evidences of strangulation, he said. The wound in the chest was found to have pierced the lungs and heart, causing internal hemorrhage, from which no doubt death had quickly ensued. The Court examined all the servants, both of the deceased, and of Mr. Gough. The former's chokra stated, "I dun know nothing, Sah, that time Master done take dinner, same time only I going take little rice ; after, sleeping near Master's bandy—Master please ask'im butlah, Sah." In fact all the servants managed to prove a complete *alibi*, and no light whatever could be thrown on the deed, to show how it occurred. There was consequently only presumptive, corroborative, and circumstantial evidence to go upon, and all this certainly told against Gough. The appearance the body had presented, when found, justified the suspicion that a duel had been fought between deceased and his brother Officer, resulting speedily in the death of the latter, while the former, in the present opinion of the Doctor, was labouring under mental excitement.

Then they gravely fixed upon their verdict, though for some time they could not agree as to its wording.

"The Court is of opinion that the deceased Thomas Smiley, late an Ensign in the Hon'ble East India Company's Service, met his death by being stabbed

through the lungs and heart when engaged in unlawfully fighting a duel with his brother Officer, Lieutenant Charles Gough."

The Court then adjourned, Major Hearty endorsing the proceedings, and forwarding them to the Adjutant.

It was one o'clock before Mr. Huntly left Gough's tent. He came out with a grave, serious face, but a brisk, energetic step, and went straight to the Colonel's tent, into which he was at once admitted. Colonel Maurice was looking over the proceedings of the Court of Inquest, which Dillon had forwarded to him; Mrs. Maurice was working, and Ada was teaching her two little brothers their lessons. When they all looked up at Mr. Huntly, they saw by his face he had something of importance to tell them.

"I've been over there, seated with Mr. Gough, as you know," he began, "and however clearly circumstantial the evidence against him may be"—(and here he energetically thumped the table, making Mrs. Maurice's work-box rattle), "I'll stake my reputation, he's *innocent*! There must be some fearful mystery, which time may unravel; some plot to cast the stain of the crime upon that young man; but that it was he who committed it, I shall never believe!"

A flush of deep joy rose to Ada's face as Mr. Huntly boldly spoke, and gratitude and hope thrilled in her heart.

The one she loved so fondly, wasn't guilty then after all!

"He has begged of me to ask you to let him attend the funeral, Colonel."

"There can be no objection to it, that I can see, Mr. Huntly, but his guards must not be dispensed with."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OPEN GRAVE.

WHEN it struck four on the evening of that long dismal day, every Officer and soldier in the camp, except those who were on duty, were in full dress. There had been a Regimental Order issued for the parade of the corps at that hour, and though the Orderly Havildars had received orders to inform the men that they need not attend, if they did not wish it themselves, not a single man was absent; for they all liked what they knew of the poor "Chota Sahib," and if there were any who really did not care to attend, they went because they saw so many of their comrades go willingly. The band were drawn up in front of the Hospital tents in their gay, red-plumed shakos and white jackets, their various instruments shining in their brown hands, and the stout old Drum Major grasping his staff, importantly standing at their head. Behind them were the drummers, in their red, profusely-braided coats, and slings all ready for use, while at their feet lay their drums, muffled in black cloth.

The rank and file were formed in two long lines facing inwards, forming a narrow lane, the further end of which opened not far from the little knoll on which the toddy trees grew, and which is described

in the fourth chapter, while at the nearer end were the Non-Commissioned Officers : the whole were standing at ease, in perfect silence, for not a whisper could be heard amongst them.

The grave had been dug during the day by a fatigue party (assisted by the few store lascars who had not gone on the evening before with Viney, the Quarter Master,) close by the spot among the toddy trees where Gough and Miss Maurice had been seated. It was made very deep and narrow, and had a large quantity of huge, heavy stones piled near it, intended to be used in filling the grave, so as to prevent animals from burrowing. At a little past four, six drummers went into one of the tents, and soon appeared bearing the body, carefully wrapped in a clean, white sheet, covered with a flag, and stretched on a roughly-made bier. Then the Drum Major, raising his silver-headed staff, gave the word, and the band began to play the slow, grand music of the "Dead March in Saul;" the muffled drums rolled and rattled with a deadened sound, and the procession moved slowly away, and passed along between the two thin lines.

Immediately in front of the band marched the funeral escort, with their arms reversed, and commanded by Harris with his left arm and sword-hilt bound with crape. This escort was formed mostly of men of the Grenadier Company ; many of them veterans of thirty years' standing ; as

fine a set of Native Soldiers as could be picked out of India. They were as smart and clean as water, pipe-clay, and the brush could make them. Their arms were intensely burnished; every bit of brass and steel shining like a mirror; and they kept admirable step too, stalking along as one man—tramp, tramp—to the measured beat of the intensely thrilling music. They held their heads erect and looked straight before them, but their faces were very grave and serious; and be it known that the wild, mournful notes of Handel's beautiful Dead March; 'soothes the savage ear,' and is affecting even to the Asiatic's untutored mind. When they have once heard it, they can recognize its solemn tones, even at a great distance off; and designate it the *ronee ka bajah*, or, "music of weeping."

Following the band came the corpse, borne on its bier, by the six, beardless, bare-headed drummers. The Union Jack of Old England was spread over the coffinless corpse (for of course no coffin could be procured) and hung down in thick folds on either side. It was held by poor Smiley's three brother Ensigns, all older men, however, than the deceased. Behind the bier came the Junior Officers, the Seniors marching along in their rear, with all their sword-hilts and left arms bound in crape.

Gough followed in his full dress too, but unarmed. His head was erect, and his eyes looking straight on before him over the heads of those

in front, until their gaze rested on the bier of him whose death he was supposed to have caused.

There was a worn dejected look on his unusually cheerful features, and his bright color had given way to a pallid hue, not at all in accordance with the strong, healthy appearance of his entire frame, for his nerves were as firm, and his step as unshaken, as though he were marching past in Review.

As the procession cleared the end of the ranks forming the lane, and neared the grave, Mr. Huntly stepped forward, and preceding the corpse, began to utter the awe-inspiring, opening words of the Burial Service. A word of command or two, and the escort were soon in the same position that the rest of their comrades had been in, and were leaning on their "reversed" arms while the rest of the procession passed slowly through their ranks.

Mr. Huntly was dressed merely in his plain dark suit, but his commanding figure needed no "*customary robe of solemn black*" to show it off to advantage, being upwards of six feet two inches in height and of proportionate breadth. His rich voice, with its sweet thrilling tone, was now more earnest than ever, and did not fail to impress the minds of all around with a deep and undefinable awe.

During the reading of the Service, few of the Officers were able to restrain their emotion, and when the Clergyman, with faltering voice, pro-

nounced the strangely solemn words—"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust unto dust," there fell many a tear on their late comrade's shroud. Hillier, unable to restrain his emotion, retired to a little distance; O'Rourke, who had resorted to his usual way of keeping up his spirits, was nevertheless greatly moved, and kept his face hidden in his handkerchief, sobbing aloud; while Nerton trembled and shook, as he gazed down into the deep grave, at the bottom of which lay the mortal remains of *his victim*. His victim? Yes!—for in truth, as will afterwards be shown, he was the indirect cause of Smiley's having been killed.

A little apart from the rest, his head bent upon his chest, and his face deadly pale, stood the accused—Charles Gough. It would need but little knowledge of physiognomy to tell that his paleness was not the expression of fear, but rather the mere outward manifestation of some torturing, internal struggle. Conscious of his innocence, he was almost maddened by the thought that he should thus stand degraded, and charged with a deed of the deepest dye. He listened to the well-known words of the Service, but they were in sad contrast to the thoughts that were now rushing through his mind. He was doubting the goodness, and even the justice, of Him, of whose Righteousness they now spoke. But in an instant, by some mysterious agency, there flashed upon his memory the words, "shall not the

Judge of all the earth do right?" and, as if by a gleam of Heaven's own light, the poor, dejected, downcast man's gloom was in a moment dispelled. Doubt gave place to Hope, and on the conclusion of the Service, stepping calmly forward to the edge of the open grave, he said in a subdued but firm tone :

"Mr. Huntly, and brother-Officers; I wish to say just one word before we go. I know perfectly well, that in connection with this most sad event, circumstances are most terribly against me, and I frankly admit the propriety—the necessity indeed—of the steps taken by the Commanding Officer. I feel most keenly the dreadfully humiliating position in which I am now placed. None of you know, and I sincerely hope none of you will ever experience, such misery as I have passed through this day. I have been distracted, driven almost to despair. Only a very few moments ago, however, a ray of Hope pierced the gloom that was in my mind, and there has been impressed upon me, in what I cannot but think an almost supernatural manner, a firm conviction of the undeniable truth that in this matter, as, I believe, in all else, "The Judge of all the earth shall do right," and I have only to add in the presence of you all, in the Name of the Great God of Truth, and over this open grave, that I am *perfectly innocent*—aye as innocent as the child unborn--of the blood of my late friend, Thomas Smiley!"

At the conclusion of these few solemn words, there was an audible sigh of relief, as if some heavy load had been removed from the minds of the listeners. Each looked to the other; (except Nerton, whose eyes were still bent upon the corpse at the bottom of the grave :) but no one seemed inclined to leave. Struck with Gough's calm and manly bearing, and the truthful tone of his words, all seemed convinced of his innocence, but the evidence of circumstances were so over-poweringly against him, that not one of his own Regiment could say anything in reply, knowing as they did that they might be called upon to give their own evidence as to everything in connection with the matter.

Mr. Huntly alone felt himself free to speak, but even he was necessarily guarded in his few remarks. He merely said, "My dear friends, I am sure you have all listened, as I have done, with the deepest interest to what has just been said by Mr. Gough, and whatever opinion we may have formed with regard to this most melancholy event—whether we may think that the deed may have been committed by some wild fanatic, thirsting only for Christian blood—or by some midnight prowler in self-defence mayhap, when disappointed of his spoil, and who has cunningly concealed the evidence against himself—whatever conclusion we may have come to—sure I am, that we deeply sympathise with Mr.

Gough in his present painful and unhappy, but, I would add, not necessarily dishonorable position. Every one of us here, I feel sure, cannot but be glad to know that the whole case, now so wrapped in mystery, shall ere long be thoroughly investigated by those who are accustomed to drawing the truth clearly out of the labyrinth of entangling circumstances. Moreover as Mr. Gough himself has reminded us, we have the assurance of that word which cannot be broken that "The Judge of all the earth shall do right." I shall therefore thus leave the subject; but before we go, let us all think for a moment of the lesson which this open grave teaches. The uncertainty of life is a hackneyed subject, doubtless; but it is not therefore the less important. It is as true as it is trite. How few the months—nay the weeks—that pass away without bringing us the intelligence of some friend's death. Each mail brings its melancholy list, and nowhere is it more true than in this country, that "in the midst of life we are in death;" and it is wise and well for a man often to pause, and ask himself, "Am I prepared for this great change?—what if I were to die to-night?" There can be no doubt that, even in the case of the best of men, it is a solemn thing to die, but to the Christian—the man who really believes that Christ is his Saviour, and who manifests his belief by his daily life and conversation—death is robbed in a measure of its terrors; it is no longer

to him, the approach of a stern executioner, but the coming of the *Prince of Peace*. And may it not be that the peaceful smile we often see on the features after death, may have been caused by a loving voice whispering in the ear—dull to all else. ‘*Be not afraid, it is I. In my Father’s house are many mansions ;’ I have gone and prepared a place for you, and now I have come again, that where I am, there you may also be.* And so my dear friends, it may be with every one of us at the last. God, the Great Father, all loving, ever kind, desires that all his children should return to the Home where there is room for all, and where there will be a welcome for all. If we will only remember that we are His children, and seek by His help to live worthy of our high calling, He will, for Christ’s sake, receive us graciously. To all who really love Him, the grave is but the Gate of Heaven—but alas ! what is the grave to them who spurn his Name ? I will not detain you longer. May God help you and me, my dear friends, so to live that we may not fear to die.”

As Mr. Huntly said this in his most attractive heart-felt manner, there were none present who were not visibly affected, and now they slowly moved away from the spot in little sad groups of two or three. The band, as is customary, struck up a gay quick-march ; but the music sounded harsh,

and grated unpleasantly on the ears of the mourners, as they departed camp-wards.

Nerton alone remained by the grave-side while the lascars proceeded to fill it in, for this bad misguided man had, during the burial of his victim, felt the most agonizing throes of a guilty conscience. He could not leave the spot ; he could not tear himself away as he would wish to do. There was no getting rid of the incubus of a remorse, the awful pangs of which, he had never imagined could be so severe. For a good while he stood leaning on his sword, and looking down upon the corpse ; his cheek like marble, and his hands trembling. Hardened though he was, the awful, heinous nature of the deed he was the cause of, burst through the barriers he had raised round his conscience, and filled him with the most abject despairing remorse. He asked himself now what he had done all this for—was the happiness he looked for worth all this evil ? Alas ! how could he be ever happy bearing the terrible burden of Cain. If *she* ever did become his wife, could he withhold this great, troubling secret from her ; and oh, what would be her feeling to know she was the wife of a murderer ? “ My work ! my work,” he thought, as bit by bit the white sheet which covered the corpse became hidden by the clods and masses of earth thrown over it. “ All my work ! had I but known half the misery this would have entailed upon me, I would never have done

it ; and it is but a chance, notwithstanding this dark deed, whether I shall ever be her husband. And I have done all this—robbed him—poor fellow—of life ; sent him to his grave. Oh the mother's curse, the sister's curse—the father's bitter curse—must fall on me, aye and God's—*ever*—lasting——.”

The poor sin-burdened man crept slowly away to his tent ; not a tear mingling with the cold perspiration on his cheek to relieve the agony under which his heart almost burst in twain. He flung himself on his bed, and moaned aloud in the very bitterness of the remorse that was gnawing at his soul, and tearing out of it every atom of peace of mind. He rolled about restlessly, and felt as though he were going mad. His servant came in, and proffered his condolence and assistance, but met with a sharp command to leave him alone ; and so departed, thinking it was grief that was so disturbing his Master's mind. Poor Nerton ! what would he not have given at that moment to have undone the awful deed his plotting and designing had led him into ? The words that Gough had made use of, burned into his very heart, and seared and scorched it terribly. “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?*” The guilt-laden wretch would only have been too glad now to have drowned the inward conviction that there was an All-seeing Providence, but in spite of all his attempts to do so, there arose a

he had written and signed, locked it in the secret drawer of his desk. This done, he replaced the tossed pillows of his cot, and laying himself down, called his boy, and told him to fetch two or three glasses of brandy from the Mess. The spirit greatly roused and relieved the torpid, shattered state of his mind, but he felt too ill, both bodily and mentally, to go to Mess that evening; so he undressed, and—poor, unregenerate man—was soon restlessly slumbering, without a single call upon the Mercy of the God he had offended.

Two days before, while the Hospital Dresser or Native Medical Assistant was preparing a draught according to a prescription which had just been sent by the Doctor, a sudden puff of wind caught the slip of paper as it lay on the table, and bore it away out of the tent door. It went on tossing about, here and there, for some time, and lodged at last at the foot of a little bush. Here the white-ants got at it, and seized upon it with avidity; covered it with a plaster of clay, and eat away a good part of it. Smiley's grave was dug near that bush—and on filling it in, and scraping up the scattered mould, one of the lascars lighted on the tattered prescription, and finding the writing on it in some language unknown to himself, carefully placed it in the folds of his turban.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD RESOLVES.

WHEN O'Rourke left his comrade's grave that evening, and walked towards his tent, there was quite an unustal look of determination upon his countenance. He had taken a deep draught of his favorite beverage—brandy—before attending the funeral ; but it had not, as we have all seen, served in the slightest to compose his mind. Mr. Huntly's words, however, spoken solemnly, but at random amongst that mournful group, had found a lodgement in his rough heart, and had struck a severe blow at his great visible failing at all events. Not a word he spoke to any one until he reached his tent, when he called his boy, and gave the well-known order to bring the brandy bottle.

O'Rourke's *butler* was "one Madras man ;" always cleanly and neat, and indulging in mock diamond ear-rings, and long Dundreary whiskers. Often had this nice little man cheated his master out of a good deal of "bazaar yekeshpense," as well as daily been accustomed to help himself liberally from his "Master's rone bottlee brandy." He had often, however, for some reason of his own, expostulated with O'Rourke upon his taking too much, in a manner which the hot-headed Irishman invariably resented in great wrath.

Poonaswamy (that was the butler's name) would say after a short cough,

"Masta please don' make angry upon me, Sar ; I only telling every day true word Masta, Masta know very well what kind sarvint me ; Masta same like fathder, mother me Sar. Everything for Masta I doing—Masta drinking too much the brandy, that not good ! 'spose Masta getting sick ; then what I do ?"

"Get another, I suppose ; you old rascal !"

"Ei—oh ! what for Masta calling that name ? I niver do any wrong for Masta, true word I telling. Every day I tending Masta same like Cooly-man, Putting foot on head, then niver mind. I poor fella—Masta big gentleman ; calling rascal me then *what* ?"

"There that'il do ; have done now, *Poh* !"

"Masta saying *Poh* ; then, what I can do ? Only I telling Masta one word, Masta niver believ't my word ; then *what* ? Masta drinking too much the brandy ivery day ; that very bad business Sar, Masta can die soon, then Masta's fathder, mother plenty"——

At this, O'Rourke used to yell at the cringing domestic, and turn him out, with more energy than prudence.

On the present occasion, however, Poonaswamy brought the brandy and an empty tumbler, and placed it on the little camp-table alongside the clay goblet of water, without one word.

"Boy," said O'Rourke, solemnly?

"Sar."

"Do you see this brandy bottle? Well I'm going to smash it, and have done with the cursed liquor for ever."

The boy made a sound something like, "Tch, Tch," and shook both hand and head in disgust.

"What for Masta doing that business? Masta must never break; giving brandy bottle me, then I lock him up. One time taking little glass for Masta, then no harm. Every time taking, that no good."

"I'm going to smash it, I tell you; and let the liquor go to —— pot!" answered O'Rourke, grasping the neck of the bottle vindictively.

"Sar, Sar! please Sar! don't pill Sar. My wife got plenty bad paining often time. Littlee brandy putting, then very better coming. Don't pill Sar, that no good. Good brandy 'pilling, Sar; then *what?*"

But O'Rourke wasn't to be moved by any solicitations. He marched to the tent-pole, and, with a smack of the bottle against it, sent pieces of glass flying all over the bare grass, (for he didn't own such a luxury as a carpet;) while the liquor, very precious in the boy's eyes, deluged his trousers, and saturated the ground all about him.

"There!" said O'Rourke, triumphantly, eyeing the small neck of glass left in his hand, "that's gone

into the middle of next week anyhow ! Now listen to me, you *ould thafe* !" he went on, launching into his wildest brogue. " If ye iver bring me one dhrop of that cursed stuff again, unless it's ordhered for the good of me health, be the siven pipers of Corrk, I'll not lave a whole bone in ye, so I wont. D'ye hear me now ? If it's medicine I want it for, bring it, if not, don't; no matter if I should half kill you for disobeying me."

Poonaswamy, who had never seen his Master displaying such decision of character before, was rather frightened, but promised faithfully to do all he was told.

" But that's the very thing ye'r not to do, ye *omadhaun* ! If I ordher brandy now, what will ye do ?"

" Masta what telling, that I do."

" Och you thick-head !" roared O'Rourk. " Once for all now ; if I iver see you bringing me brandy again, at my own or any other body's request ; out ye go ; clane out of my service ! *Poh* !

The butler felt his dignity hurt at these threats, but wisely said nothing, and left his master to himself. Then O'Rourk took off his heavy full-dress, and went searching among his boxes, and half-open deal cases. It was a book he was looking for—not his Bible though ; for he knew too well he hadn't one in his possession. But he was fond of reading ; and a friend at Samulpettah had lent him a few

light works to beguile the dreary hours under canvas. He turned up "Field Exercise and Evolutions," "Sword Exercise," "Articles of War," "Jebb's Treatise," and "Standing Orders"—but, as he came to each of these, he thrust them back ignominiously, muttering the word "shop."

At last he came upon a small volume, down among a pile of dirty clothes. It was "The Pathway of *safety*."

He was going to chuck it in again, but it struck he might look into it, and see what it was like. He took it to his easy chair, and opened it. On the fly-leaf were the words :

To John O'Rourk, from his fond Aunt Mary, with a prayer, that a blessing may attend its perusal.

Then O'Rourk thought of Home, with all its joys, and stirring reminiscences. He distinctly remembered the day his loved Aunt had put this little book into his hand, and had asked him to read it whenever he had time; and he thought, poor fellow, with a sigh of regret, how that he had never looked into it till now. Full of these self-reproachings, he began to read—and what follows will show whether a prayer asked years ago in faith, by one who dearly loved Him, met with a gracious answer or not.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE MOVE AGAIN.

THE Regiment made a move the following morning, in earnest. The march was rather a long one, as the next stage, Droogpaumlah, was some 18 miles distant. It was pitch dark when the Regiment left the Camp at 1 A. M. with a tremendous shout of "Deen," but as there was a guide in front leading the way with a glaring torch, the flames of which, as he went along, he fed from a leather oil-bottle, there was no danger of the corps losing its way, as poor Mr. Huntly had done. Miss Maurice rode beside her father on a beautiful little Pegu pony he had brought over from Rangoon for her ; and Mr. Huntly accompanied them on foot, for though there was another pony ready saddled for his use, led along-side, the stalwart Clergyman preferred walking, more particularly as the morning was now delightfully cold. It was really very pleasant—this night-marching—at least so Mr. Huntly thought. Of course it was impossible to see anything of the scenery around them, but they did not miss this much, for the country about here was flat, barren, and uninteresting, and there was nothing that could have possibly attracted their attention, or

called forth their admiration, even had they been able to enjoy a view of it.

The bandsmen and drummers, as they marched on in advance, cheerily sang song after song, with peculiarly loud inspiring choruses. There were Military Songs. "Riflemen form," "Red, white, and blue," "The drummer lad." "The girl I left behind me," "The young recruit," and last, but not least, "The taking of Rangoon," roared forth by the bass drummer, with a voice as bass as his instrument. This instrument, by the way, wasn't now borne in the orthodox fashion, between two drummers. A coolie had been hired, and the huge bass drum was poised high upon his head, while he trotted on, made to keep up by a thump or two on the back from a drumstick. They sang naval songs too, and love songs; the Fife Major treating them to "Irish Molly, Oh," and the comic fifer to "Mootamah," and other highly laughable productions. It may seem odd, all this apparent gaiety and fun, when they had buried an Officer only the day before, under very painful circumstances; but there is a wonderful springiness and elasticity in the spirits of soldiers of all races—down one day, and up another—which is too well known to be commented on. The sepoys too sung *their* provincial melodies, as they gaily bowled along with their clumsy muskets, and heavy knapsacks and pouches. The Mahomedans revel-

led with great delight in "Taza ba taza ; now ba now," and the Telingees in "Munajah crutedah rah muluckoonoo"; both of which tunes have certainly some pretensions to harmony. But the little recruit boys who followed in the rear of the Light Company, and who were almost running in their endeavours to keep up, sang a most unmusical air, the burden of which seemed to be a constant repetition of "Narriananah !" Dillon thought it dreadfully discordant, as no doubt it was, but, poor souls, they highly enjoyed it themselves, and, what's more, it was a Hymn of praise to their deity, which they felt no shame in singing.

Buldar Khan of the Grenadier Company indulged his comrades, and greatly amused Mr. Huntly, with a solo in which he recapitulated in Hindostanee blank verse the merits of a certain priest of Anacondah, named Budder-ood-deen. There were loud bursts of applause from his brothers in arms in the shape of "Shabash bhai ! Afreen !—Teekh !*" &c., while even the Hindoo portion of the company seemed to approve of it also.

Mr. Huntly enjoyed this part of his walk greatly, striding along between the Colonel's huge charger and Miss Maurice's pony ; and trying to chat with both riders, though poor Ada was not at all inclined to conversation, for she was thinking of

* Bravo, brother—excellent—very good.

somebody who was coming on in the rear as a prisoner—and wailing for him in her very heart. They had marched some 9 or 10 miles, when the day began to dawn, and the bugles sounded a halt. Then the column was wheeled into the road-side ; the arms were piled, and the men allowed to “fall out” for a quarter of an hour. How they did enjoy themselves during that short time, with knapsacks unslung, and their hands and arms free. Some of them sat down in little groups, and smoked small rolls of tobacco (which could hardly be called cheroots) with great gusto. Others took off their great white-covered hats, and diving into their recesses, pulled forth *pan suparee*, *betel-nut*, snuff boxes, and even *arpas* better known as “happ-pers.” Others clustered round the *puckallies*, or water-men, who had driven their water-laden bullocks up, and drank and washed out their mouths with the now pleasantly cold element, while a greater number, stretching themselves in soft grassy places, went off into peaceful slumbers. The Officers collected together, and had tea and coffee, ginger-wine, and even brandy and soda water, as their tastes dictated ; for a Mess servant had luxuriously been sent on half-way, and, having lit a fire, had water boiling, and the different beverages ready by the time the Regiment came up.

Poor Gough did not join them of course. He

had been marching along in the rear with his guards and O'Rourk, who had been permitted to accompany him ; and the two friends now sat far away from the Mess-fire quietly smoking and talking. They sent them tea, however, which both graciously accepted and enjoyed, O'Rourk bravely spurning his favorite S. and B. which Big Turban graciously tendered to him. Miss Maurice jumped off her little pony, gallantly assisted by Mr. Huntly, and went over to the palkee in which her mother reclined, and they both had their coffee too. Mr. Huntly and the Colonel had a *nip* of ginger-wine out of a private pocket pistol produced by the latter, and lit their cheroots with great complacency. Time was up soon ; the assembly blew again ; knapsacks were slung ; belts buckled on ; hats adjusted and arms unpiled. Miss Maurice indulged her pony in a bit of fresh bread ; and sighed, as she remembered whose hand had fed it at the last road-side halt ; Mrs. Maurice settled herself in her palkee, while her bearers girded themselves again, and the bullocks were " put to " to the coach which bore her two little sons and ayah. Mr. Huntly essayed to mount his pony, but found that the animal was fresh ; the stirrups refused to be lengthened to a comfortable fit for his long limbs and that he still much preferred walking ; Gough rose and stretched himself, flinging away his weed ; O'Rourk sighed for a *peg*

before the start, but heartily repented of the sigh the next minute, and mounted his horse beside the poor prisoner ; the bugles blew the advance and with another roar of " Deen !," away went the long red line to the tune of " So early in the morning," played by the fifes and drums. This latter part of their march was not as pleasant as before the halt. There was a great deal of dust, which whitened the moustaches, hair, and whiskers of the men, begrimed the snow-white covers of their black hats, and by no means improved the appearance of Mr. Huntly's coat and hat. An old fuckeer—a sort of travelling dervish—who seemed, poor fellow, to be doing penance all his life, yelled out welcomes of all kinds as the Regiment neared Droogpaumlal ; showering blessings most profusely on the heads of all, from the " Illustrious Colonel Bahadoor," to the tired-out recruit boys, and timing his welcomes and blessings so as to make them applicable to the different ranks, both European and Native, as they passed, as if in review, before him. At length the Regiment turned off the road into the wide plain on which they were to camp, and which was marked out by the little red colors placed by the Quarter Master and his functionaries, who had gone on from Rajooloopettah the evening before last, and wondered what had delayed the corps for a whole day. Dillon had ridden ahead to ascertain the position

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of the camp and take up a wheeling point, and met Mr. Viney, who at all times had a comic disposition, but was now rather *serio-comically* inclined.

He stood with his legs very wide apart ; a chee-root between his lips, and his hands in his trowsers' pockets.

" You're a smart set of fellows, *I don't think*," was his first greeting—" vegetating quietly at Rajooloopettah, instead of getting to your journey's end as soon as possible, like wise men ! I've a great mind to report the whole set of you to the C-in-C. I was nearly dying of hunger and thirst and solitude's charms all day yesterday, and my poor Serjeant fretting for his *conjug carissima*. It's too bad ! What's up that you didn't come on ? Where's Gough ?"

" A very sad business has occurred, Bacchus ;" (Viney's nickname) " We've left poor Smiley behind us."

" Good heavens ! you don't mean it—sick, eh ?"

" No, poor fellow," and Dillon's voice dropped. " Worse than that ; dead, and in his grave."

" God bless me ! dead ! what, of cholera ?"

" No, unfortunately—better it had been. There was a—a row—and—and poor Gough—hang it, I can't tell you, it sticks in my throat, old fellow, and has quite unsettled me. Here's the Regiment—show me the road."

“Smiley dead ! why, he was the most unlikely”
——, and little Viney went on ejaculating, and recounting the virtues of his poor deceased brother Officer, till the head of the Regiment came up, and the music of the fifes and drums put an end to his remarks.

Mr. Huntly went over to Gough’s tent during the day, and had another long and earnest conversation with him, in the presence of O’Rourk. He felt more and more convinced by the young man’s manner, that he was entirely innocent of the crime laid to his charge. Gough was by no means cast down ; he leaned back in a lazy manner in his chair, with his slippered feet propped up against the table, and talked calmly and reasonably of the shocking affair, except when expressing his wish to know the real criminal, and then he launched into *unreasonable* though very hearty invectives, against that misguided individual.

“It’s deuced hard lines—confounded hard. Poor Smiley ! I was in a thundering rage with him to be sure, and I do believe, Mr. Huntly, I would have done something to him, but that I was so sleepy ; and now, some brute—some cunning villain—has put the whole affair upon *me*. May Heaven’s curse light on him as sure as he walks the earth !”

“It was a cruel, horrible deed for whoever did it,” replied the Clergyman; “but, my dear fellow, you should really never call down a curse upon any fellow-mortal, no matter how abhorrent in your sight. Let God be the judge.”

“He is my judge, Mr. Huntly—he knows who’s clear and who’s not, but my fellow-men don’t, and I’ll suffer of course, if the real villain isn’t found out. God knows the truth, but those around me don’t: they’ll condemn me, and I might as well have no—no *Heavenly* judge at all. Why did He permit it?”

“The ways of God are far too deep and wonderful for His poor created beings to sound. He permitted a dark and very cruel deed to take place at Jerusalem many hundred years ago. He permitted the only pure and *sinless man* who ever walked this earth to suffer a most unjust and ignominious death; but oh, what a depth of love and wisdom prompted that! I feel sure that this trouble has been brought upon you, my poor brother, for some wise purpose; perhaps to draw you, and urge you to accept His Salvation. What matters it if our frail bodies perish? Are not our souls more valuable? Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, but fear not, “ye are of more value than many sparrows.” I trembled for my life a few days ago, but His arm delivered me. Trust in Him—believe on Him—

seek Him earnestly in prayer, and He will in His own way and time, deliver you also."

"I might have done that before, but I can't now—everybody thinks me a murderer."

"You had many opportunities before, and yet you would not do it then. When the road was smooth you would not go—and now when it's rough you will not go either."

"That's thrue enough!" cried O'Rourke—"and if he had prayed when he was first urged to it, this trouble might niver have overtaken him."

"What's past cannot be recalled, Jack; so let's say no more about it; but what plagues me so confoundedly is that I slept so soundly. I'm beginning to think I was drugged in some manner."

"I trust that, under God the whole mysterious business will yet be brought to light," returned the Clergyman. "The high reward that has been offered may shortly lead us to some clue as to the real perpetrator. But even if it should not—even if you were convicted by the circumstantial evidence—be not cast down. The accusation is an awful one, but God, for Christ's sake, will enable you to bear the ignominy of it if you ask Him, earnestly, and in faith. I must be off now"—he went on, looking at his watch, and rising to get his hat; "but I wish you would let me pray with you before I go."

Gough only shook his head negatively, and held out his hand, with a smile.

Mr. Huntly took it, and went on, "It strikes me you will yet bless God for having caused you to go through these deep waters. There is a purpose in everything which it is permitted weak mortals to do, and we are not wise enough to sound that purpose; but depend upon it, God our Father, cannot do wrong; He is wiser than any of His created beings here below. This may be His means of bringing you to Himself. If you think over your past life, I'm sure you will remember many times when you were almost urged to give your heart to God, when circumstances were thoroughly different with you than they are at present. (Gough winced under this, for his memory reverted to a few evenings back.) I believe that this trouble has been brought upon you to urge you to see your need of a Saviour, and to give your heart to Him, and though I've known you for so short a time, I ask you, as your very best friend, to accept this opportunity. Now is the time! 'Seek Him while He may be found.' Your poor brother officer had a quick summons to the Judgment seat; are you prepared for yours?"

"I think you ought to take his advice, Dowd," said O'Rourke, when Mr. Huntly had left. "He evidently means well, and wants to serve you."

"Then why don't you take it yourself, old fellow; since you recommend it to others."

"Upon my word thin, I've a great mind to; you know it was yourself told me, the other day, about our hearts not being right in the sight of God. I've been thinking over it, Dowd; and as sure as I sit here I know mine's wrong altogether. I've given up drinking as yet, and by God's help I'll give it up altogether; but somehow I don't feel myself safe. What if it was *my* turn to-night to die? What chance would I have of ever reaching heaven?"

"Oh! Joney, you're not worse than others; besides, in spite of what these overgood people say, I believe God is more merciful than to consign all of us to hell for mere foolishness. He didn't make us to damn us."

"And yet, my dear Dowd, it strikes me we're trying to damn ourselves. I've niver made one single effort to save myself, or follow God's laws; and as for what you said about God being merciful, Mr. Huntly has just been telling how He showed His Mercy towards us. Come, come, it wouldn't do exactly to be sinning heinously every day, and saying God's too merciful to punish us. It seems to me that, if we did believe Him so loving and merciful to us, we'd try to live in obedience to Him."

"I can't understand how Jesus Christ was really the Son of God," said Gough.

"No more can I, I'm sure. But as for that, I understand very little of the wonderful things God has done. If He can do *every* thing, (and you said just now you believed Him to be very merciful,) we ought surely not to doubt but that if He was willing to save us, He was able to do so any way He wished. Our not understanding it can make no difference ; it strikes me it's our not believing makes the difference. But I'm no authority at all, I know, and have no right at all to be arguing about it ; only I wish I did believe it, for I'd feel safe thin, and I don't now."

Gough did not rejoin. He thought O'Rourke perfectly right, however, for he would have been very glad to have felt safe himself.

That evening, Mrs. Maurice and her daughter were seated outside their tent, while the Colonel and Mr. Huntly had gone for a short stroll. The elder lady was reading, and the younger thinking sadly of her poor lover, when O'Rourke walked up.

Now Mrs. Maurice looked upon herself as a kind mother to all the young men of the Regiment, and often did kind motherly things for them. She was a little afraid of O'Rourke, because, poor thing, she never knew when he might present himself before her the worse for liquor ; but she never tried to avoid him, or any of the rest. There was always a kindly word, and often a friendly deed towards them, when they sought her friendship

and counsel. Ada had been a great centre of attraction to them all at first, for her personal beauty, and kindly manner, had of course their charms; but when they began to think her too staid and quiet, or as some of them expressed it, *narrow-minded*, she soon ceased to attract most of them. Mrs. Maurice now laid down her book when she saw O'Rourke approaching, and greeting him pleasantly, asked him to sit down.

The little Irishman talked gravely, and in a subdued tone, (which was most unusual with him), on various matters, and after a little, spoke in terms of praise of Mr. Huntly.

"Some say he's an egotist, and very narrow-minded," he went on, "but I believe myself that he's the kind of man to do us all a great dale of good; I heard him talking to my poor friend Gough, and he spoke so kindly and earnestly, that he quite won my heart. But I think he's afraid of me, for he doesn't spake to me so seriously anyhow, and I'm sure I want it."

Mrs. Maurice had never heard O'Rourke so candidly admit as much before, so she now bent a look of kind enquiry towards him. In that look she formed the judgment that the little man was sincere and in earnest.

"Do you really feel in need of earnest, serious advice, Mr. O'Rourke?"

"God knows I do, Mrs. Maurice. I niver

thought of these things before, and wouldn't heed anything of the kind said to me. I don't want you to think me better than I am ; for I know there's but little good in me ; but if——if it was my turn to go to-night, I'd like to be shure that I was going to a happy place."

" And are you not sure, my poor boy ?"

" No, indade I'm not. It's not that I'm afraid to die, for I've faced death now and again ; but there's something, Mrs. Maurice, beyond that, that I'm very doubtful about."

Ada was silently listening, greatly interested, and was now waiting to hear her mother's rejoinder.

" Don't you know that Jesus Christ has died for you, Mr. O'Rourke, and that by that death your sins have been blotted out ?"

" *Have been* blotted out !" repeated the young man, "*have been* ?"

" Yes, have been. When He said, '*It is finished.*' He meant that the work He came on earth to do, was entirely accomplished. It wasn't a half-done work ; He did it all ; offered a full sacrifice for *your* sins—leaving *you* nothing to do in order to be saved. Only believe it !"

" It is too good !—too free ! you are telling me what I never heard before."

" I am telling you what is, in God's mercy, only the plain blessed truth. How could you or I hope to be saved if it were not in this free manner, which

leaves us nothing to do ; we have all been atoned for, but we must not add unbelief to our other sins, by spurning this atonement."

" But you do not mean to tell me that all my sins are forgiven already ; that is too much to believe Mrs. Maurice."

Not only do I tell you, Mr. O'Rourk, but God Himself has told us all. ' *Whosoever believeth,*' He says, ' shall have life everlasting.' If you believe that He *so* loved you as to give Himself for you, you will try to follow Him."

" Well, I will try, with God's help, to believe this, dear Mrs. Maurice."

" Now is the time, Mr. O'Rourk ; you must not put it off. There is danger in waiting till you think you can believe better ; that is a great temptation of the devil. He wants you to put it off. Oh accept God's word now as *perfect truth*. Believe it now, and you will find what great peace of mind will follow. Then you will feel yourself safe, should you know you were to die in a moment."

O'Rourk was silent for a little time. Doubt upon doubt, subtle reasoning and argument, fear of ridicule, and of his own strength of mind, together with hundreds of excuses, were passing quickly through his mind, trying to drive out the little atom of faith that, by God's grace, had already found its way into his heart ; but Mrs. Maurice and Ada, unknown to each other, were embracing

this opportunity of silence, to simultaneously lift up their hearts to the Omniscient God, and implore His blessing on the word spoken.

Their prayers were answered !

By a mighty effort, but aided by a Divine power he felt not, O'Rourke broke away the thousand snares that were spread to entangle that little atom of belief in his heart, and the whole glorious but simple TRUTH, in all its love, burst upon his mind, and filled him with unbounded peace and happiness.

In a voice trembling with a thrill of delight he said, " Mrs. Maurice, *now* thank God I believe it ! I do believe that Jesus Christ is my Saviour. Oh how happy I feel ! "

This rough-hearted, roughly spoken young man had actually tears of great joy flashing in his eyes.

Mrs. Maurice almost cried with joy too. She could almost have embraced the delighted-looking little man, as he sat quietly murmuring, " All this for me ! all for me. " Miss Maurice actually did cry. The whole thing came so suddenly upon her, and seemed so marvellous—and yet it was nothing but a simple child-like exercise of Faith—that she could not restrain the flood of tears that welled forth. O'Rourke ! One of those she least expected to so shortly accept Christ as his Saviour, was now a believing Christian ; had simply accepted God's word as true, and was finding such a calm

peace of mind, as he had never before experienced. Oh how she wished her lover would turn to God also; there was nothing so difficult in it. All he would have to do would be to give up his own heart, and his selfish feelings, and rely entirely on Jesus. But the ways of God are very mysterious. The very one she had prayed for, and hoped for, and had really thought would be the first to accept salvation, was refusing it in a careless rebellious spirit; while the one supposed to be too far steeped in sin, and too enthralled by the vice of over-indulgence in strong drink, had arisen like the Prodigal, and gone to His Father, who had given him now a holy peace, arising from the knowledge that his sins were all forgiven.

“Oh Mr. O'Rourk!” she cried, with all her heart in her words, and her bright brown eyes brimful of tears of delight. “Jesus has told us, that there is ‘Joy in the presence of the angels of God even over one sinner that repenteth.’ Think of that!”

“And I am the greatest sinner that was ever born I think,” replied O'Rourk; “I have done so much for the other side—for the enemies of God—that it is high time I should begin to serve Him truly and faithfully.”

“I will make you a present of a little Hymn-book, Mr. O'Rourk,” said Mrs. Maurice. “I'm sure you will often enjoy looking over it. There's

a beautiful Hymn in it called 'Soon and for ever.' I'll go and get it for you."

As soon as Mrs. Maurice had disappeared behind the chick at the tent-door, O'Rourk leaned over his chair towards the young lady, and said quietly,

"Miss Maurice, I know what has passed between you and Mr. Gough, for he told me all about it. I'm a very firm friend of his, and we have got the Colonel's sanction to offer a large sum for the apprehension of the rale criminal. The men will have heard of it before now, and I trust something will turn up to relave poor Gough; anyhow you don't belave him guilty, do you?"

"No!" said Ada, firmly. "Papa told us that Mr. Gough solemnly affirmed his innocence, before every one, at the funeral; and I know the poor young man is too truthful to make a false statement, even to save himself from any trouble. It is a terrible accusation he is under, Mr. O'Rourk; but I trust it has been only sent him for some wise purpose. Indeed, I believe him entirely inuocent of it"

"That's right," said O'Rourk; "I thought you would. I too am very shure that if he suffers for this, he'll suffer in his integrity. But it's been troubling the poor fellow to think that you're doubting him. May I tell him from you that you don't do so?"

Ada bent down her head, and slightly blushed. "If you think it will be any comfort to the poor man—yes, you may do so. Do you think his heart is still unchanged, Mr. O'Rourke?"

"Mr. Huntly talked beautifully to him, and I trust my poor friend will yet listen; but he's careless like the most of us. Oh how happy he would be, if he had the knowledge that his sins are entirely washed away. I wish he had the peace of mind I feel."

Mrs. Maurice now came out with the Hymn Book, and handed it to the little Officer. The first Hymn, at which he opened it, began with,

'Oh Happy day that fixed my choice!'

How his face brightened up, as he read it! "Aye indeed! This is a happy day—the happiest day I have ever experienced," he cried, "May God enable me never to forget it."

Then he rose, and bidding the ladies good evening, went over to his tent, a new man.

CHAPTER XVI.

BUNGAROO.

IT was all very well for Nerton to have thought that he would shortly show himself to be a religious man. He never as yet had once gone to the Colonel's tent for that purpose. Suffering beneath the burdensome weight of remorse, he could not dare assume a careless manner, or even act any other part. He was fearful of betraying himself, and letting the quick eyes of others perceive that there was something wrong with him. His boy certainly noticed it, but, not being given to the study of human character he merely thought it was grief for the loss of a comrade, that was so affecting his Master.

Nerton spent the whole day, in Camp at Droogpaumlah, very miserably. He never left his tent once, and did not go to Mess in the evening. At about 8 o'clock, while he was looking over the paper he had written the evening before, a turbaned head, with the vilest and most repulsive face ever seen in any colour, intruded itself at the chick of the tent-door.

Nerton didn't see it at first, but went on reading; then the owner of the ugly head gave a short admonitory cough, and pushed his body half into the tent.

“ Sahib !”

Nerton looked up, and his face blanched at once.

Then the ruffianly-looking native came up, and stood beside the tea-poy, at which the Officer sat, in a somewhat impertinent manner.

“ Well ! what d’ye want ?” asked Nerton, fiercely.

“ *Kya Sahib ?*” (what Sir) asked the other, impudently, chewing something, carelessly, at the same time.

“ You did it well, Bungaroo,” and the Captain ground his teeth.

“ Ho ! Sahib (Yes, Sir) so well, that neither of us shall be hanged,” was the reply, in Hindostanee.

“ What’s that you say ? I can’t be hanged in any case.” The ugly native gave a short laugh, and went on chewing.

“ You need not come here trying to frighten me, Bungaroo. I’ve got you under my thumb, and could have you hanged any day. Do you hear ?”

“ Ho Sahib ! But if I hang, so will you, and we’ll both go hand in hand to Jeha”——

“ *Choop !*” * Nerton’s face was redder than it had ever yet appeared to any one, and he started angrily from his chair. “ I don’t want you any more. You’ve done what I wanted, and are of no use to me now—don’t come here again ! *Jow !* (Go !)”

* Silence.

"They have offered 2,000 Rupees ; and I don't care for life," went on the other, quite coolly. "Do you think they would pardon me if I told them all ?"

"That they would not ! The Colonel Sahib would hang you in one second to the nearest tree."

"With you beside me, Sahib," continued the ugly fellow, "ha ! ha ! Though you didn't do the deed, you forced me to it ; and I don't forget that. No Sahib ! I have proof too."

Nerton's face grew pale again.

"How much, did you say, they offered ?"

"Two thousand Rupees."

"I will give you three."

"I wont take three."

"Four, then ?"

"No, Sahib."

"Five ?"

"Very well. If I get *five* thousand from you they will hear nothing from me, and I and you can live on. Where is the money ? give it to me Sahib."

"Ass ? I hav'n't it here."

"Then give me a chit for it. That will do."

"Look here now, Bungaroo ; I see plainly what you mean. You want to get me in your power."

"No, Sahib. But you want to get me in your's. You have proof of what I did in Burmah to Mr. Tudor, and you think you will have nothing more to do but hand me up for that, as well as for this

crime But you are mistaken ; we are both in somebody else's power. The night you forced me to kill the 'Chota Sahib' *somebody was listening outside and heard it all*. He told me so, and there is no doubt, will covet the 2,000 Rupees. Now if you give me 5,000, I will give him half, and he will keep silence. If not, never mind. It's nothing to me, I don't care to live."

"You liar !" ejaculated Nerton. "It's all a lie—a lie to extort money."

"I will swear it's true by all my sacred gods," said the other, still carelessly chewing his opium.

*"Well, I said I would give you the money."

"And I said I wanted a chit for it, on your *Sowkars** at Madras."

"Do you remember my loaded pistol, Bungaroo ? It is here, by my hand."

Well you may shoot—*Sahib ka kooshee* (at your pleasure). But he, who heard your words, will apply at once for the 2,000 Rupees. He may be doing so this minute."

Nerton groaned, and opened his desk.

"Will you not be satisfied with my word ?"

"The other man will not be satisfied with mine, Sahib."

The Captain pretended to be indifferent. He sat down and filled in a cheque on his Agents at Madras

* Banker.

for Rupees 5,000, payable to Havildar Bungaroo, No. Seven Company of his own Regiment.

"Now Bungaroo ! listen to me. I am as careless of life as you are. I don't care a *cowrie* if I die to-morrow. There is the chit. You can read English ; and will see that it's a genuine one. You may tell now, or not, just as you please."

"I will never tell—never," replied the other, folding the cheque, and putting it in the folds of his turban. "It will do me no good to tell. I will just say to the Sowkar, who will cash this, that it is a reward you have given me, for saving your life in Burmah. That's not an unlikely story, and if you're asked you can say the same. As for the 2,000 Rupees offered, it is nothing to me, now that I have got 5,000."

"I thought you said you would give half of it to the man that overheard us, Bungaroo."

"So I will ; he'd betray us if I didn't—but I don't think there's much fear, if I act quickly—Sahib will marry soon now, I suppose."

"There now, *buss jow !*"

"Sahib-koe-murzee (Master's pleasure); salaam, Sahib." As the native left, Nerton thought he heard him chuckle, but he was too desperate to care for that, and he went to his bed only to dream terribly that Smiley was standing beside him, accusing him of *murder*.

CHAPTER XVII.

WASTING AT NOON-DAY.

OFF again next morning with a swift swinging pace to Tellah-wunkah, twelve miles off !

Gough's companion on the road, this morning, was Harris, and a pleasant merry companion he was. He told laughable stories of fox-hunting and steeple-chasing, and kept our hero's mind greatly diverted from the trouble that was burdening him.

About 7-30 A. M., they were all, as usual, lounging in the Mess Tent, indulging in *Chota hazree*.* O'Rourk was amongst them too, taking coffee ; and on this account became the subject of slight general chaff.

" My eyes ! O'Rourk, a Teetotaller !" cried Viney." You're allowed Raspberry vinegar, though, ain't you ?"

" I suppose the Padre made you take the pledge, old fellow," laughed Hillier. G

" Take a little wine for thy stomach's good, Jack ;" put in a black-whiskered Ensign.

" We won't know him in a month or two, he'll be such a respectable member of Society," observed another.

* Early tea, literally, ' Little breakfast.'

"It's time enough surely for me to thry and begin to be one, thin," answered O'Rourk, calmly.

"Never mind their chaff, Paddy," cried Harris, swinging back on his chair, with his feet on the edge of the table. I'll back you to live longer than any of us, now that you've given up hard drinking."

"He couldn't drink soft water,
So he took to drinking *hard*,"

sang the new Adjutant.

"I don't care a button for all your chaff, old fellows," said O'Rourk, sipping his coffee. "I know you only mean it in fun ; but it strikes me that, instead of thrying to make a fool of me, you ought all to be encouraging me to give up a bad habit."

"Bravo ! go it, Jack my boy ! You're improving wonderfully ; you'll soon be able to speak like a book bound in calf," chaffed Hillier.

"Instead of in red morocco," chimed in the Ensign, before-mentioned.

O'Rourk, who was thoroughly good-natured, only smiled awkwardly at this rather personal insinuation.

"You'll be as rich as a Jew, my lad," said Viney, who comprised the Mess Secretary, as well as Quarter Master. "Your liquor bill will come down in no time. I don't know what we'll do without your patronage."

"Come, come, you fellows, shut up, and leave the man from Galway alone," cried Harris, who was inclined to take O'Rourke's part. "He has had enough of it for once. Bye the bye, Dillon; have you been doing anything in that poor fellow's case?" and the speaker nodded his head in the direction of Gough's tent.

"Oh I have done what I could," replied Dillon. "The men all seem delighted that a reward has been offered; for you know how they like Gough. They seem to think the real criminal is in the Camp, and I believe, are trying their best, among themselves, to unearth him."

"There's an old saying, *Murder will out*," remarked the Quarter Master.

Nerton winced a little at this.

"But then it may not 'out' for years," said Cocky.

"It may be for years, or it may be for *never*
Oh Kathleen Mavourneen! &c."

sang the Regimental poet.

"That fellow Rustum is as sharp as a needle," observed old Danniels. "I believe he'll ferret the whole business out—he and his brother-in-law, Buldar Khan. They're like a couple of detectives. Here boy! some more toast; and look sharp about it. Why Nerton, old fellow!" he continued, turning to that worthy, who had been sitting in silence.

the whole time, "What's the matter with *you*? You hav'n't spoken a word all morning. Down in the mouth, eh?"

"No, not exactly! I've been rather feverish the last day or two. A little thing upsets me, and I——."

"Tut, tut man; drive it off. It's the worst thing in the world to give way to bad spirits. Cheer up!"

"Cheer up Sam, and don't let your spirits go down, &c."

This was from Dillon of course.

"I'm afraid Nerton and O'Rourke are both going on the same tack," laughed Hillier. "They'll have faces as long as my arm in a day or two—singing Psalms, &c. Who will you back to win, Cocky?"

"To win what?"

"Why, to win the race to *heaven*."

"Tush, Long-legs; it's too bad. That sad business of the other day ought to have sobered *you* a little; and in all conscience, you looked as if it would. Because some fellows have more tender feelings than others, it's no reason you should put it down to piety, and chaff them for it."

"Besides we all know where you are racing to, as hard as you can, you black sheep," remarked Danniels, sarcastically.

"Oh I'm running the other way I know; there's

no doubt about that. *I've* no chance at all of getting to the good place."

O'Rourk could not keep silence any longer.

"No chance ! Don't talk about that, any more, Hillier, when God's letting you live on day after day. Supposing you were allowed to live on for three or four years more, instead of dying this very night. That's giving you no chance I suppose. You're getting all sorts of chances of Salvation, but you're too heedless to take advantage of them."

"Hullo !" There were bursts of ejaculations of surprise from the group of Officers.

"John Knox come again ?"

"A Huntly ! a second Huntly !"

"Another Spurgeon !"

"Jack O'Rourk's turned a *New-light* ! hurrah !" cried Hillier.

"I don't know what you mean by that word, Hillier ; but anyhow I'm not ashamed of it," said O'Rourk, quietly. "I *do* see things in a new light, thank God ; and I think I've lived long enough to His dishonour. It's time for me to begin to live to His Glory."

"Bravo, O'Rourk ! I didn't think you had such pluck," cried Cocky. "There's no doubt about your being right ; but fellows don't like being preached to about living to glory, and all that. They'll respect you far more if you keep your notions to yourself."

"I don't care about such respect," replied the impulsive Irishman. "Besides if nobody had told me the truth, it isn't likely I'd have found it out for myself."

"And what good does all this *truth*, as you call it, do you after all, Jack," asked Viney.

"Good! why, my dear fellow, it gives you a peace of mind, such as you would wish never to lose; it prepares you for death, or rather for a life beyond death at any time; it makes you——."

"Oh! do shut up, O'Rourk!" said Hillier, petulantly; "why go on talking about death, and all that, like an old woman, because one poor fellow has gone out? I'm very sorry for poor Smiley, but he can't be recalled, and there's no earthly use in jawing about death, in all manner of uncharitableness. We're not going to die yet."

"You don't know anything about that," replied O'Rourk.

"If my friend opposite," cried Viney, referring to the Irishman, "is going to treat us all to a sermon, he'd better put on a surplus at once."

"He may preach till he's exhausted, but he'll only waste his breath as far as I'm concerned," muttered Hillier. "He can't come over me with his nonsense."

Dillon again.

"I'm a young man from the country, but you can't come over me."

O'Rourk got up to leave the tent now, though he had not finished his coffee. He felt uncomfortable, poor fellow ; and no wonder. Like all men, when they first find the truth of Salvation burst upon them, O'Rourk was zealous, and warm with the new Love towards God, and all His creatures. He thought he ought to speak of Christ's love for sinners everywhere, and at every opportunity, for he was afraid of betraying himself into feeling ashamed of the cause he had espoused ; but he also felt that he was incompetent to talk thus, that he knew too little as yet ; and that perhaps, if he stayed, he might in his impulsiveness say something more productive of harm to the cause he wished to honour, than really of advantage to it.

" Pray for me, old fellow !" shouted Hillier, with a mocking laugh, as the other reached the tent door.

" I'll take you at your word," and, with this last impulsive answer, the little Officer disappeared.

" Ha, ha !" laughed Hillier. " There goes poor Jack ; he's about one of the very last I should have thought would take to religion ; and it's nothing but funk sets him off. He's afraid of dying too soon ' with all his imperfections on his head ;' and he thinks he ought to be supernaturally good before he goes off the hooks."

At this moment an orderly sepoy came to the tent-door, and saluting, said he had a *chit* (note) for the Adjutant Sahib.

Dillon took it. It was the usual kind of chit that obtains throughout India ; a small scrap of fools-cap, folded in two. It was addressed very roughly to——— *Dillon, Adjutant.*

“ *Whew !* by Jove !” The Regimental poet laureate’s face assumed a serious expression. “ Look at this, Viney ; take care you’re not in hot water for it,” and he tossed the open note over to the Quarter Master. Viney glanced over it quickly ; it ran thus :

Dr. Dillon,

Two men just admitted—bad with Cholera. They say it’s in the village—and the camp-followers have it—tell the Colonel sharp—better move on—don’t come over—I’ve ordered Hos’l Tents further away—will stick by them all day—unless we move.

Yrs. s.....y, Aug’s Milton.

“ Why, what on earth !” began Viney ; “ here’s a go. Hang it, it’s not my fault ; I made the strictest enquiries, and the village authorities never mentioned the name of *Khi Julab.*”

“ *What’s that ? CHOLERA !*”

There were anxious faces looking round at the Quarter Master, as he rose quickly to his feet. He gave no answer, however.

“ There’s no use in any one getting alarmed,” said Dillon, passing his fingers through his straw-colored whiskers, and leaning over a chair to reach his sword. “ I dare say some foolish fellow

has been gorging himself with unripe *Kunkaries*,* and is paying the penalty by suffering from diarrhoea."

"Did the Doctor say, *Cholera*?" Hillier asked, in a hoarse tone.

"I believe he did, but you all know how Milton's so fond of making out diseases, where there are none. He'll insist upon having a regular Cholera Camp, I suppose, and on our taking short marches morning and evening."

"I expect the Colonel will want to see you about all this, Viney," said Hillier, almost angrily.

"Then I'll just tell you what it is, Long-legs, if the Colonel wigs me, I'll just have the Kurnum—Putail—Cutwal, or whatever the swell in the village calls himself, tied up, and let my lascars give him a few dozens. He has hurt my feelings; I'll hurt his."

"You're something like blind Tim Turpin, Bacchus, who—

' Was a feeling man,
For when his sight was thick,
He used to feel for everything,
And that was, with a stick.'

Come, come, you fellows! what are you all looking so glum for; get some more spirit-cheering coffee,

* Cucumbers—a wild kind of which grows plentifully about this district.

and be more yourselves. Why Hillier, you look as if you'd just had a dose of quinine, or salts."

"Oh, don't talk of doses, Dillon; we'll have quite enough of them, I suppose, if this goes on much longer. It's precious hard lines, *I* say; here we are; having got well over the bullets, *dhars*,* swamps, malaria, and fever, besides a hundred other plagues, incidental to a Burmese campaign, to get mown down by Cholera when we're almost at the end of our march. If that's not hard lines, I don't know what is."

" 'Tis the song; the sigh of the weary
Hard times—Hard times,"

sung out Dillon, carelessly.

"The very worst thing that can be, is to let one's spirits go down, in these cases," drawled a sandy-haired, and shaky-looking Ensign, called Simcox, "and to keep them up, the plan, of course, is to pour them down. Brandy's the very best specific in case of Cholera."

"Seen it tried," said Danniels; "wasn't a bit of use. We marched down eighteen years ago—Maurice was a Captain then—to Chittledroog, and when Cholera attacked us, every mother's son of us—Men, Officers, and C. O., took to drinking like fishes. It wasn't of any use, though. Fellows

* A large knife, so called in Burmah.

died off in scores—and it was so bad among the Officers, that the Colonel wouldn't let the 'Dead March' be played, it preyed so on the minds of the living."

"A case of

'Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the————.'

But there were no *ramparts* I suppose in your case, Danniels," laughed the poetical Adjutant. "There! I've been sitting, chaffing, here long enough: I must be off to the Colonel's. Hand me my *Tulwar** Bacchus, like a good fellow—~~Hullo!~~ Hullo! here's old Lutchmiah; now I bet he's coming to report about those two having Cholera; he always brings reports of matters, long after they've been reported, seen to, and settled. Well! Jemadar Adjutant, *Kya hi?* (what is it?)"

The Jemadar Adjutant was a smart Hindoo soldier of upwards of 20 years' service. Promotion had latterly been rather slow in the grade of Regimental Native Officers, and Lutchmiah was beginning to despair of ever becoming a Subadar. The fact of Cholera being in the Camp, however, seemed for some reason or other, to cheer, instead of grieve him, and he had quite a smile on his face, as he made his report in Hindostanee.

* Or sword, in Hindostanee.

“ TWO NATIVE OFFICERS ; ONE HAVILDAR ; FOUR NAIGUES ; TEN *Privates*, and ONE *Puckally*,* admitted into Hospital ; ill of Cholera !”

“ God bless me !”

Dillon stamped savagely with his foot, and hurriedly buckled on his sword belt.

“ Now, we’re in for it, you see,” he muttered, “ keep up your spirits, my lads ; and be jolly. It never rains, but it pours ;” and he went out with his Native subordinate, trying to look as cheerful as he could.

Mr. Huntly had been with Gough all morning. The good, honest-hearted Minister had striven earnestly to impress upon the young man the necessity of a change of heart—of laying up for himself a treasure in heaven above, by simply believing in the finished atonement made for him.

Now be it known to you, readers, that Charles Gough, troubled though he was, and had been, was still steeling his heart, and had not, since the morning on which he had started on the shooting excursion, offered up a single prayer or made one appeal to the Ruler of all things in earth and Heaven. O’Rourke, now so greatly changed, had, in his rough, simple, but truthful manner, expressed his convictions to his poor troubled friend, and, as he loved him with a warm brotherly love, had besought

* A water-carrier.

and urged him to lay all his cares on a Power, far more potent, and much more merciful than man. But Gough was still unconvinced. He had heard of—nay seen—some men who, he had often heard it said, had gone mad about religion. He had his senses about him, he thought, and no man, not even the honest Mr. Huntly, could urge him successfully to permit his head to be fairly turned with inward opinions on religious subjects.

He could not help feeling that his friend O'Rourke's head had been somewhat turned by the weight of his religious feelings; but when he pondered on this, he at once admitted that the change in the little Irishman's character, resulting from his new-born feeling, was a noble and an excellent one. No man who knew O'Rourke could deny this; but Gough smiled as he thought that those very men, who knew best how much improved his friend was, would be the first to laugh at him as having become a 'New-light.' This was what our hero feared for himself; he was in a strait between two choices; to be laughed at, by his brother-officers, and fellow-men, as a fool, or perhaps something worse; or to continue to be in their opinions, "a jolly old brick," and be all the time risking the eternal peace and happiness of his soul. Besides all this, he almost shuddered at thought of his being compelled by conscience to give up amusements and recreations, which he now felt were perfectly innocent.

As Mr. Huntly, without, in the slightest, hurting our hero's feelings, threw reason after reason into the scale of his argument, and opened his ingenuous heart to the young, almost distracted, man before him, the other began gradually disclosing to the good-natured minister, the nature of every obstacle that kept him from believing in Christ as his Saviour. In a frank but faltering manner he told him of his devoted, earnest love for Miss Maurice--told him how he had been refused, and that, though the young lady had acknowledged a reciprocal attachment, she felt it her duty to refuse to be united to him, as was not *in heart* a Christian. He told Mr. Huntly that, though he supposed he was no worse than others around him, he had expected to be looked upon as a Christian, but that in truth--in heart--he was no more a Christian, than the cooly who carried his cavady boxes on the march. A Christian, he knew, was a believer in Christ; in the Son-of God who had atoned for all sin; and that he (Gough) was only prevented from believing in this, by his fear of being thought a hypocrite--a madman--or anything but a sterling, broad-minded, honest man. Mr. Huntly tried to impress upon him that to be honest to one's own convictions was the foremost principle that should guide a reasonable man; that if he was so, his honesty to the world around would naturally follow, and others could not fail to perceive it. He told Gough that

in his opinion, he had been dishonest to his own convictions, in order that his motive for having those convictions might not be mistaken, or called in question; that he had, while placed in a position between two choices, a worldly and a heavenly one, chosen the former, (though in his heart he felt the latter to be the right one), and that consequently that choice had brought its own troubles; that he had not as enjoined “sought first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,” when all these things should, without doubt, have been added unto him. He knew, he said, that the little word “if” was too often applied, when the facts connected with it were past, and it was too late to remedy them; but that he might easily perceive, on thinking over it, how the very feelings influencing his mind, would have prevented his being led into the circumstances which caused him to be suspected of a fearful crime, had he, when urged to do so, accepted a Saviour; felt himself that Saviour’s debtor, and a repentant, and erring mortal. He further kindly advised Gough to act up to his convictions from the present, at any rate; to make provision for the soul first, counting everything else as dross to win Christ. He felt sure that the lady in question would prove a most excellent wife, but that both husband and wife must be of the same mind; and he entirely agreed with her, that a promise of marriage was, under present circumstances, altogether out of the

question. He did not consider the conclusion she had arrived at, narrow-minded, or uncharitable in the slightest, but that, taking the manifested Word of God as her guide, she had made a noble self-sacrifice, and, unlike him, had acted honestly up to her own convictions.

“ Well, Mr. Huntly,” said the young man ; “ As I earnestly and sincerely love Miss Maurice, I cannot give up the idea of marrying her ; and if I now accept what you say, and what I know to be right, what think you she would imagine ? Why that I, who told her *I loved her better than my soul* only a few days ago, was making a pretence of religion simply in order to gain her as my wife. She would despise me.”

“ I don’t think Miss Maurice despises, or would despise, any one, Gough. I believe her to be a truly sincere Christian. I do not say, give up the idea of marrying her at some future time if God spares you, and delivers you from this peril. But what I want you first and foremost to do, is to give yourself, heart and soul, to God—to devote yourself to Him who has redeemed you. Then you may, in all conscience, show her, not that you love your soul better, but that you love your God and Saviour better. You are thinking too much of this earthly wish of yours, which, if no light is thrown upon this crime you are so involved in, will undoubtedly never be realized. You are lean-

ing on a reed. The desire of being united to her has too great a hold on your mind. Leave all the future to God, who careth for you. You have not gone to Him yet; you have not asked Him to deliver you out of this fearful snare into which you have fallen. You never ask His counsel in any matter. No! I distinctly say—Give yourself to Him—before it is too late. Death the destroyer may be even now close to you. Let God's love have the highest place in your heart, and be ever ready to say, even though He should think fit to withhold the realization of your dearest earthly wish from you, 'Thy will be done, my Father.' "

Gough rose suddenly, and walked up and down the tent with heavy strides, and clenched hands; for a fearful mental struggle was going on within him. Mr. Huntly remained silent, turning over the leaves of his Bible, but made one, short, earnest appeal to God's throne, for the light of the blessed Truth to shine around the young man's darkened path.

Suddenly Gough stopped in his walk; "Oh God, guide, and help me!" he murmured, "I cannot do anything myself. Help me; teach me; guide me, enlighten me!" and then he buried his face in his hand, and leaned up against the tent-pole.

Oh how that strong heart was almost torn with conflicting emotions.

Was it madness think you, reader? No! it was

the awful struggle ; the war between the Good and Bad spirit—the fight which grace has with the natural man, and which every true Christian, almost, has experienced on conversion ; the driving out of the demon unbelief to give place to the simple child-like faith in the ever-present, ever-loving Saviour, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

When Gough looked up again, the mental struggle was over, peace was reigning, where before was no peace, and his peace of mind was reflected, as it were, in every line of his calm, bright face.

“ Mr. Huntly, I have been a fool ; eating the husks, when I might have had bread enough at my forgotten Father’s Home. ‘ I will arise and go to Him.’ I have made up my mind ; come weal, come woe. I’ll trust in Christ. Oh my friend ; help me to persevere ; will you not ? ”

Mr. Huntly’s only reply was to take the young man’s hand, and grasping it heartily, kneel beside him at the little camp-table, while his whole heart and voice ascended in a triumphant song of praise to the great Jehovah, whose new-found servant was now bending in adoration before him.

While they knelt thus, Dillon, whistling, lifted the chicks of the door, and had stepped into the tent, before he perceived (having just come out of the glare) how the two, who occupied it, were engaged.

He was come with an important message from the Colonel to Mr. Huntly, but his whistle abruptly closed, and he started back in intense surprise, when he perceived Gough kneeling beside Mr. Huntly, who was praying aloud with all his heart. Uttering a kind of hasty, awkward apology, he retired at once, but waited outside the door, till Mr. Huntly finished his prayer, and Gough gaily bid him walk in.

"I suppose you know what bad luck we're having Mr. Huntly," he began; "we have about twenty men in Hospital attacked with Cholera; and I'm very much afraid it will spread still further."

"Indeed!—I wasn't aware of this calamity. What a sudden event it is! I suppose however every means possible will be made use of to try and avert it. Are the poor men very bad?"

"I've just had a chit from the Doctor; who seems to have but little hope of many of them. The Colonel is going to send Mrs. Maurice and family on, some stages in advance; and requested me to ask if you would wish to accompany them, as, not only for your own sake, but that of your family, you might wish to avoid the risk of infection in the Camp."

Mr. Huntly bent down his head, and considered the matter for a little.

"God will take care of my family, and myself, Mr. Dillon" he said, after a moment or two. "It

would give me great pleasure if I could, in any way, be of use to the Colonel's family ; but I think it is my path of duty to remain in Camp, where, I thank God, He has already blessed my endeavours in His service. I do not fear the disease, and if I am cut off, I know there is a happy home for me."

"Pray, consider further of it, Sir," urged Gough, laying his hand on the clergyman's arm. "It is running a dreadful risk."

"It may be," replied Mr. Huntly ; "but I consider it as much my duty to remain, as it is Dr. Milton's ; I have been thrown among you, my friends ; and I will not desert you in the time of need. God will watch over his own, as much in a Cholera-stricken Camp, as elsewhere."

"Then I may take this answer to the Colonel, as your fixed determination, Sir?"

"Yes ;—stop, I will go, and tell him myself ; but I forgot, I am forcing myself on your hospitality all this time. I am the Colonel's guest, but"—

"You are ours, now, Sir, if you wish to remain with us."

"Nay ! he is mine," said Gough—"but I am in disgrace—and"—his voice choked him almost—"charged—with a—base crime ! How can *you*, Sir, be my guest, disgraced as I am, though *innocent*?"

Dillon's orderly here lifted the chick at the entrance of the tent, and handed in a note to the

Adjutant. "Ah ! I thought so ; its getting worse, Mr. Huntly ; *'eight more men in Hospital ; three dead,—and,—and—Heaven help us !—'* *Mr. Simcox attacked with the disease.'* "

" Hand me my hat, Gough ; that determines me, I shall not forsake the Camp. Oh, trust in God, my friends ; trust in God. 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High' shall not be afraid of 'the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.' "

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HODD FACTS."

A GREEABLY to orders received, Launcelot Viney, Esq., *neè* Bacchus, accompanied by his Departmental satellites, started off in the afternoon to mark out a new position for the Camp, which, however, was not to be more than four or five miles distant from its present situation.

Quarter-master Serjeant Mathers, armed with a very favorite oak bludgeon, was stepping quickly along on foot; his pipe—he could never give up his pipe for a cheroot—stuck in his mouth, and his sword stuck under his left arm. Viney, who was mounted on his grey charger, feeling lonely, rode up, and overtook his brisk-looking Subordinate, who seemed as though he were walking for a wager.

"You get along at a great pace, Serjeant!"

"Ah well, Mr. Winey; I *do* jest like a good set-to of a walk *hoccasionally*," he replied, saluting as he strode on. "That is, 'owever, when it don't *hinterfere* with my sleep; but four mile aint nothing to speak on, Sir. This 'ere Cholera business, breakin out, is rayther startlin, Sir; aint it?"

"Oh well! we must just take it as it comes,

you know, Mathers," replied the Officer, gaily. "I suppose you've heard that Mr. Simcox has been attacked."

"*Hattacked*, Sir! 'as 'e, indeed, Sir? I'm verry sorry to 'ear it ; but 'e'll mend, Sir ; 'e'll mend, please God. May I be permitted to *hask*, Sir, if the rights of the case, concernin poor Mr. Smiley's death, 'ave bin *hascertained* yet. I was uncommonly sorry to 'ear about poor Mr. Gough, Sir."

"Well Serjeant ; we're all very sorry, you may be sure. Evidence seems very much against him ; but everybody is inclined to think it was a made-up affair, and nicely palmed off upon him. We've known Mr. Gough for some time, you know ; and we don't think he's the sort of man to——."

"No 'e aint, Sir! 'E aint the gen'leman to do it ; I said so all along. 'E aint the gen'leman, Mr. Winey—knowin, as 'e well do, 'is size and strength—to pit himself in a sword-fight with that mere lad—'E'd never do it, Sir. I don't believe it *hof* him."

"And yet," rejoined the young Officer. "I'm sorry to say they had a severe quarrel together, before they parted at the Mess that evening, Serjeant. Besides, who else could have had any possible motive in Mr. Smiley's death?"

"Hah ; that's as it stands, Sir," replied the N. C. O. logically, "but in any case, Mr. Gough

aint the one to commit a *norrible* *hact* like this. 'E didn't do it; I'll stake my—my pay on it. 'E's *hinnocent*; *hinnocent* as the—as myself," he went on, knocking a stone out of his way with his big stick; and beginning to get excited. "Well, Sir, 'appen Mr. Gough didn't do it; somebody *helse* did; and 'appen somebody *helse* did, who was 'e? and why did 'e do it?"

"That's just it exactly, Mathers," said Bacchus, almost laughing, in spite of his efforts at suppression.

"Wo'ever 'e was, Sir. I'd give arf a rupee to see him 'UNG, AS 'IGH AS HEVER HE CUD BE STRUNG HUP!"

Viney could not restrain his pent-up laughter any longer. He fairly shook in his saddle, at Serjeant Mathers' expression of indignation; and burst into roars of convulsive merriment, till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"And I'll just tell you wot's more Sir; I wouldn't let 'im *hoff* stringin *hup* neither, not for *temprinsanity*; nor no *hother* *sanity*," continued the Serjeant, wrathfully. "I'd 'ang 'im as 'igh as 'Aman was 'ung on 'is own gallis. Now between you and me, Sir, and the"—he was going to say "wall," but not seeing any near, he substituted "stones on the road," as silent listeners—"between you and me, Sir, and these 'ere stones; quite confidential, and private-like, I'll tell you

some think as I heerd on, which is *facks*—down right *facks*. Love's at the bottom of it !”

“ Love ! ha-ha-ha !” roared the Quarter-master.

“ It's a *fack*, Sir ; and its a *hodd fack* ; but nevertheless it's a true *fack*.

“ What ! that love's at the bottom of it ?”

“ Well, Sir ; things *do* get about somehow ; and I *av'e* heerd some think strange, which is *facks* ; but I know my place, Sir ; bein in the *Harmy*, and I know more'n to speak to a *Hofficer* hover freely ; but there's some think I've on my mind, Sir, and I'd like to *hask* a few questions, *relaytive*.”

“ What are they, Serjeant ?”

“ Jest this, Sir. Does ye know—pardon me, Sir, it aint imperence, on no 'count—does ye know, if Mr. Gough was really in love with Miss Maurice ?”

“ Viney wondered how on earth the Quarter-master Serjeant knew about Gough's courtship, or how he even suspected it. He did not like to give a decided opinion ; so he answered, shortly.

“ Well ; suppose he is ?”

“ Well ; Sir—don't think me steppin beyond bounds, Sir,—but 'appen your honor don't know there's another *Hofficer* as is in love with that young lady ?”

“ Certainly not, Mathers ; and I don't think such a thing was suspected.”

“ Well, Sir ; it is *hodd*, and no mistake. I'm

wery glad I've 'ad an *h*opportunitiy of speaking to your honor confidential-like about it; 'cause I'd be sorry to go and make a business about it. But I *knows* it, Sir—I knows the *facks*; on the word of my good missus, I does, Sir. I'll just tell you, Mr. Winey, wot she told me. She'd bin *hout* walkin the wery *hevening* before Mr. Smiley's murder, with the Serjeant-Major's two gells, Marriar and Sairah; and they wor a-sitting quiet enough, Sir, on a bit of a green sward-like, when by comes Captain Nerton, a-talkin to 'imself like *h*anythink. 'E didn't see 'em, as 'twas dusk-like; but they knew 'im wery well, they says; and 'e was a swearin to 'imself 'ow he loved Miss Maurice—*Hada*, 'e called 'er—and 'ow 'e could'nt a bear to see Mr. Gough goin *hup* to 'er and making so free-like. 'E was a talkin like this, Sir, and goin away abit, and lookin *hout* for some-one, and then 'comin back; so they couldn't 'ear 'zactly *hall* 'e said to 'imself; and *has* they didn't wish to be listenin there, *has* it aint *gen'leman-like*, they were tryin to slip away unperceived, when *hup* comes a native, Sir—a Sepoy, 'e looked like—and 'e and the Captain, Sir, they 'as a long talk together, and my missus, and the two gells didn't stay. Now *has* this is *honly* private and confidential, Mr. Winey, *hand* was so to me, why Sir you see I didn't think it wise to make no *h*observation on the matter on no 'count and I kep' the matter, as my missus told

it, quite, quiet; but them two gells, Sir—Marriar and Sairah—they gits a talkin to their parents about it—and *hover* they *hall* comes to my good woman's tent to talk *hover* it. My missus's Hirish, ye know, Mr. Winey, and she can't keep a secret, and the result *his*, Sir; that they're all athinkin, there's somethink deeper in the matter than any on us knows."

Viney got suddenly grave at hearing all this, but it seemed to him such a preposterous idea, that Nerton—quite Josh Nerton—should be such a villian as to work out such a horrible plot, that he tried to make light of the Serjeant's story; but seeing this didn't succeed, he thought fit to appear hurt.

"You don't mean to say, Serjeant, that you accuse——."

"I don't *haccuse* nobody, Sir; beg pardon, Sir: *I* don't. I *honly* state *facks*, and my notion that them ere facks is *hodd*."

"Odd or not, you can't make anything out of them: why, Captain Nerton may have been talking of some lady at home."

"But '*Hada*,' Sir; '*Hada*' aint a common name, be it, Sir? Least ways, if there *har* two Miss *Hadas*, Mr. Gough cant be *hexpected* to make love to the two of 'em; the one *hout* 'ere, *hand* the one at 'ome. Now Sir, there's jest some *kev-reous* things *has* 's come *hunder* my *hobservation*,

if yer don't think, Mr. Winey, Sir; that I'm makin too free."

"Of course not; fire away, Mathers."

"Well, you see, Sir; one of the Mess Boys, 'e come over to the Serjeant Major; 'and naturally gits axed all 'about this 'ere row the night afore: 'and 'e tells the Serjeant Major, Sir, as 'ow Captain Nerton 'ad bin a settin nixt to Mister Smiley, 'and a 'eggin of 'im 'on, to git 'im 'angry with Mr. Gough; then 'e told 'im as 'ow the Captain treated 'all the 'Officers to champagne, 'and goes 'over to the side-table and drars the liquor, and fills the glasses 'imself, sendin all the Mess boys to the right-about. Well this lad—sharp, 'telligent boy, Sir—'e tells the Serjeant Major, as 'ow, when the gen'lemen was 'all gone, 'e finds a little 'empty bottle 'on the ground near the table; med'cine bottle, it looked like, Sir. P'raps you'd know—'ere it 'is, Sir."

Viney took the little phial, which the Serjeant handed up, and looked at it. On the label on one side of it were the words,

"Captain Nerton,

The sleeping 'draught' to be taken at bed-time."

While Viney was uncorking the little phial, and applying his nose to the neck of it, the Quarter Master Serjeant went on stating his "*hodd sacks*."

"You know, Sir; as 'ow we left the *Tindal*,"

Captain. Verm.
R. Sig: Hopbia. Notadi 3s
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Longa purse

H. haust. 12.5.5
20. 12. 12.

Potier, (Potiah) behind at Rajooloopettah to look *h*aft^r the Camp *H*equipage; 'im and two lascars. They dug poor Mr. Smiley's grave, they tells me; *h*and *h*as they were a shovellin in the mould, Potier he picks a bit of a paper, Sir; and 'e sees the writin on't warnt Telloogoo or no sich langidge; *h*and he picks it *h*up, Sir. I can't make it *h*out at *h*all, because *h*it's partly Latin or Greek or some-think, but I sees the Captain's name's *h*on it. So I kep it Sir, and puttin *h*all together I thinks to myself that p'raps two *h*and two *might* make four. This 'ere paper *h*is kewreous, Sir. P'raps you, you might like to look *h*at it"—and the Serjeant drew forth a crumpled-up and white-ant-eaten paper, and passed it on to the Officer—it was like this——*Vide opposite page.*

"I thought prescriptions were always filed by the apothecary or dresser," said Viney, thoughtfully.

"*H*is that a prescription, Sir?"

"Yes, but it proves nothing, it only shows, perhaps, what was in the bottle, and any Doctor could have told us that, from the drops still in it. Here's all that's on it, 'Captain Nerto'—of course it's Nerton; '*Liq*,' that means Liquor. '*Morphice*'—that's Murphey the god of sleep. '*Acetatis*'—that's—oh—something acid I believe. The marks following are High Dutch to me. Then there's '*Aquæ puræ*,—that's fresh water; followed by

more High Dutch. Then there's '*ft*,' hum—ha—that's—oh! I know—*fiat*, *hookum*—order, you know—'*haust*,—rest eaten away—don't know that. '*H—s—s*' that means *locus* him: soundly, till he sleeps. More High Dutch eaten away—an *M* with a dash across it—then comes *Jas M*—the Doctor's signature, and a part of the date white-ant-eaten too. That's all! Now what can you or I, Mathers, make out of that?"

"Wy, Sir, only jest that I heerd *has* 'ow Mr. Gough slep on like a blessid *hinfant*, *hall* the time *halongside*—as one may say—*hof* the *hother hinnocent*, and, more'n that, didn't wake till 'twixt one and two, noon."

"Good heavens! Serjeant; you're right. He slept like a top; but they say it was only from excitement.

"Put two'n'two together, Mr. Winey, Sir," and you'll find the *FACKS his HODD*."

"So they are, Mathers; so they are," replied the Quarter Master; "but look here; I've thought over the matter, and it's better now that you just hand me over the bottle and this paper, and keep quiet about what your wife and the others have been chatting of. It's hard to suspect any man, much less accuse him, without proofs—though to be sure Mr. Gough's accused. Mind you don't say a word about it Mathers, till you hear more from me. I'll ferret the truth out, if I can, though it

seems thundering hard to get at ; never mind, leave it to me. I'll ride on, and think over it." ♦

Viney clapped the spurs into his grey and cantered on, but could not drive out of his head the *hodd facts* which he had heard. Could Josh Nerton be such a villain ? As he thought over the Serjeant's words, however, he began to be more reconciled to the startling idea of the quiet Captain being in some way concerned in Smiley's murder, and yet he could not imagine why—if it was really jealousy on Nerton's part—he had chosen to get rid of Smiley, and spare Gough : but then appearances were so much against the latter, and the whole thing might have been wickedly planned. In the end he got quite confused, and tried to drive the subject—for the present at least—out of his thoughts, but it stuck unpleasantly in his mind, and would not be ejected ; so that it was not until he reached the new camping ground that he had fixed upon a plan, which, if carried out, he felt sure would be quite sufficient to satisfy all doubts with regard to this strange and new suspicion. This was to charge Nerton, as if in " chaff," and in presence of the other Officers, with being silently *spoony* on Miss Maurice, and jealous of the poor, now suspected lover, and to make the very best use of the evidences he had, in the shape of the medicine bottle and the prescription.

CHAPTER XIX.

SABBATH IN THE CAMP.

THE following day was the Sabbath ; one of the most highly prized blessings to the honest striving Christian. It could not, however, under present circumstances prove a day of much rest to the poor Cholera-stricken Regiment. It had made a short march that morning ; and it was intended that it should move on again in the evening, as constant change of air and locality is deemed the wisest course to be adopted in a Camp infected with such a virulent disease.

There are many difficulties and inconveniences attached to the four or five-mile marches. A high clear ground, not easily to be met with in jungle land, is almost indispensable ; and a supply of water, which is not generally in the vicinity of high ground, should be close at hand. Then the villages are often at such a distance, as to render supplies and provision difficult to obtain ; the families of the men have to Camp at a distance by themselves, so as to leave the Regiment as clear as possible from surrounding infection, and the men themselves have naturally more irksome duties to perform. Viney had now a great deal to do ; and to say the truth, the smart little man was indefati-

gable. He left the camp early in the evening and again almost after his breakfast, to search out a suitable camping ground, a few miles further on. This spot, when found, he would not only make 'a note of' but pitch his tent on, and then (with the assistance of his Choubdar, who had been sent out from the city with a formidable paper, bearing the Minister's seal), he would make strict enquiries concerning the prevalence or not, as the case might be, of Cholera in the nearest villages, and order the supply of any provisions that might be required on payment. Divine Service was held in the Mess tent; all the Officers (with the exception of Viney and Simcox) attending, and also such of the drummers and bandsmen as were Protestants. The Colonel read the Church of England Service, and called upon Mr. Huntly to address his small congregation. The good clergyman took as his text the eleventh and twelfth verses of the eleventh Chapter of St. John's Gospel; and in a short time had fixed the attention of even the most careless of his hearers. Space does not admit of our giving the substance of Mr. Huntly's excellent counsel. Suffice that even Hillier was much struck with it; and on returning to his tent, took up his long-forsaken Bible, and pondered over the portion which had been expounded by Mr. Huntly. But indeed these grave feelings did not last very long with him, for later in the day, he might have been seen

making one of a quartette at a game of cards in the tent of Captain Mackey, who, being a godless man, had, now that his wife had left the Camp and gone on in advance, no objection whatever to turn his tent, on Sunday, into a card-playing saloon.

There were no ladies in the Camp now. They had, one and all, been sent on by their respective heads of families, and told to push their journey onwards as rapidly as possible to Sandybad.

Some of them, however, had no intention of thus obeying orders to the letter, but as soon as they had reached a bungalow some twenty miles out, and found that they had left all traces of Cholera behind them, halted quietly, and merely went on to the next bungalow, as they heard from time to time of the advance of the devoted Corps.

On the first appearance of the disease, the Colonel had, by Doctor Milton's advice, sent a runner on to Sandybad with a requisition for medical assistance, and so well had he (the cooly) done his work, that on this very Sunday, a Medical Officer, with one or two subordinates, had started for the relief of the Corps.

Viney did not put his determination of showing up Nerton into force this day, but, as he had an opportunity of having a long and quiet talk with Danniels, he made the old Captain his confidant; told him all he had heard from Serjeant Mathers, and showed the proofs in his possession. Danniels

agreed with him, that he should allude to what he had heard, in the presence of Nerton, and the others, and watch the result. However he contented himself to-day with merely looking at him well, and judging from his countenance whether he was likely to have been the villain he had been led into suspecting him. What he observed only added to his own suspicions. Nerton, though trying to act a studied indifference and carelessness to everything around, was nevertheless very nervous; the slightest allusion to Smiley's murder making him tremble perceptibly, and avert his face from the gaze of those around. On finishing his sermon in the Mess-tent, Mr. Huntly gave out, that a short evening service would be held in the Colonel's tent, on reaching their new Camp, at which anybody that chose to come, would be welcome. This service the Colonel, Gough, O'Rourke, Viney, Harris, and a few of the Drummers attended ; and every one of them ; believers as well as unbelievers, felt that it was good for them they had been there.

CHAPTER XX.

DEATH'S SICKLE.

MULKABAD was the halting place of the gallant Condapillay rangers on Monday morning. Viney had chosen an excellent camping ground ; and was much pleased when the Colonel and Dr. Milton expressed their approbation of the situation.

Of course there was as usual a general meeting of Officers in the Mess-tent at *Chota-lazree*, and Viney now thought it high time to begin to put his plans into execution.

“ Well, how near to Sandybad does this bring us, Dillon ? ” asked the black-whiskered Ensign.

“ Only twenty-four miles,” replied the poet. “ If it wasn’t for this Cholera we’d be in on Wednesday morning ; but of course we’ll have to go into a sort of quarantine, before we step foot into Sandybad.”

“ What are the casualties in this morning’s report ? ” asked the Colonel.

“ Nine dead during the night, Sir,” replied Dillon, “ but we have only had five admitted into Hospital, and Simcox is reported better.”

At this moment a stranger in uniform appeared at the tent door, and asked for the Commanding

Officer. He was invited in, and presented to Colonel Maurice.

"Assistant Surgeon Howitt, Sir;" he began, "sent by Officer Commanding Sandybad to render medical assistance to the Corps."

The new-comer, who spoke with a broad Scotch accent, was speedily introduced to all around, and, having been plied with refreshment, soon went off with the Colonel and Dillon, to seek out Dr. Milton, and render his assistance.

"We shall not have the Cholera with us long now," cried Hillier, tossing up his cap and catching it again "Hurrah!"

"How is it with the *buch-kutch*,"* Viney;" asked Harris.

"Faith, bad enough; the tindal tells me they're dying off, every half-hour."

"All exaggeration!" said Hillier.

"I don't believe it will ever stop," said the black-whiskered Ensign, "at least till it has decimated us. 'Misfortunes never come singly,' they say. Bad luck, once in a ship, goes on all the voyage."

"That's only when a shark is supposed to follow a vessel, old fellow," put in Harris.

"Aye, or when there's a Jonah aboard," added Viney, looking hard at Nerton. The latter saw the look, but calling up his self-possession, merely smiled.

* Meaning "families of the sepoys."

"As far as that goes, there must be some Jonah in the Camp," said old Danniels, winking at Viney.

"You mean with reference to poor Smiley I suppose," rejoined Harris," but I'll bet fifty to one, poor Gough is not the Jonah at any rate."

"I didn't accuse any one, did I?" asked Danniels. "I only mean that in everybody's opinion, he who committed the crime is in the Camp, and I think he's the Jonah, whoever he is."

"You're all talking nonsense," said Hillier. "Jonah was a prophet, and not a—a murderer. I go on another tack altogether. In my opinion our Jonah is a parson."

"What! Mr. Huntly! he's the most inoffensive fellow in the world, Long-legs;" cried Viney. "It's not him, or any other out-sider. I say Nerton," he continued, in a sarcastic tone, "how long is it since you've begun taking twilight strolls, and soliloquizing about her you love? I've heard something of you, old fellow."

Nerton was an incomparable actor, and could hide his true feelings as well as most bad men, but he almost lost his self-possession now, more particularly as he found Viney's words had made most of his brother-Officers look towards him.

"Eh! what—soliloquizing? I'm not aware."

"Oh, but I am," went on Viney, fully bent on pursuing Nerton, till he discovered something to satisfy himself. "You went out soliloquizing the

other evening you know, after you came back from shikarring. You ought to be more careful ; people may be eaves-dropping, you see, and women are especially apt to let out anything they accidentally hear."

" In the first place I don't know what you mean, and in the next I would advise you to drop your chaff, Viney. People have got into trouble already on account of it ;" said Nerton, as imperturbably as he could.

" I'm not chaffing, I assure you," went on the Quarter Master ; " it was told me some time ago, as a grave fact, that you were seen taking a solitary twilight walk, and heard loudly soliloquizing about the lady of your affections. You even mentioned her name." Viney looked very hard at Nerton as he thus probed the first wound he had given him, and, notwithstanding the Captain's attempts to command his nervousness, he perceived the shameful guilty flush rise over his whole face.

" I——— what ? I never———what name ?" he stammered.

Every Officer in the tent was looking at him now ; some smiling as if the whole thing were a mere good joke, and others silent in surprise and expectancy. He felt their eyes were on him, and made a great effort to brave it out.

" Well supposing I did, it's not a very gentlemanly thing for you to blaze it abroad."

"Ah, that might be, had I no other reason for it but to make a laughing-stock of you ;" replied Viney.

"You can't have any other reason that I can see."

"I have an excellent one," returned the other, "as I wish to clear up a very serious matter, which affects others, as well as yourself."

All this time Viney had kept a basilisk-like look on Nerton's face ; watching its every movement ; and noting everything suspicious in his own mind.

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Viney" ; said Nerton haughtily ; if you have any wish to impugn my character in any way, speak out"—he was very bold now ; as he had been working himself up to it, but it was too great an exertion for him ; and the next moment, he turned ghastly white, and sunk back in his chair, breathing hard, and murmuring. "I'm sick—deadly sick ; water ! a glass of water."

Three or four, noticing the great change that had come over him, sprang up in alarm, and called for brandy, while they loosened his jacket, and unbuttoned his black silk stock.

"You must take care what you're about, Viney," said old Danniels, quietly ; "He a delicate fellow, and can't stand any nervous shock, particularly since this Cholera has set in."

"He has a bad conscience, poor man, that's

what's the matter with him," replied the other, coolly; "I'm perfectly convinced of his guilt now; and I'll tell you all how I came by some startling proofs connecting him in some way, with a very guilty deed.

Nerton here opened his eyes, and glared vacantly around. "I didn't kill Smiley; on my oath, I didn't!"—he almost shouted, "It's a false charge; and as foul as it is false!"

"There! now who accused him of it!" cried the pitiless Viney, puffing very calmly at his cheroot, "I'm sure I never mentioned Smiley's name."

"Nobody's accusing you of such a thing, old fellow," said Danniels, who was supporting Nerton's shoulders; "You're unwell, and have worked yourself into excitement about nothing, have a little drop of brandy."

Nerton almost smashed the glass that was being handed to him, with a sweep of his arm. "I didn't kill him!"—he shrieked; "I'll swear I did not—who dare accuse me of staining my hands with his blood, it wasn't me—on my oath"—here his voice grew fainter and he murmured—"it was Havildar"—and he fell back in a faint, and became deadly sick supported by Danniels, and O'Rourke.

"I'm afraid it's an attack of Cholera; said the former, gravely as he held Nerton's head, and looked down on him in pity. "We'd better carry him over to his tent, and put him into bed at once."

One of you might step over to Milton, and tell him he's wanted at Nerton's tent. Here, Harris; help O'Rourk and myself to carry him."

"I'll go for Milton," said Viney, rising, and throwing his cheroot away; "and I'll bring the C. O., and Dillon over, for we must get the truth out of all this."

So Nerton was carried out, and over to his own tent—a senseless, death-like form. They stripped him quickly, and got him between the sheets; and plying him with cold-water and a little scent, soon brought him to, again; but he had hardly opened his eyes, when the severe sickness and retching again came on, indicating too surely that the prevailing malady had attacked him.

"It's a bad case, I'm afraid;" said O'Rourk; "just take a look, if the Doctor's coming, Cocky; every minute is of consequence."

"Here he is," replied Harris; as the new Assistant Surgeon made his appearance, accompanied by the Colonel, and Quarter Master.

Doctor Howitt wasn't long examining his patient, and applying the remedies; but, from the way he shook his head, and muttered "very bad case," it was plain he was by no means sanguine of a cure.

In a little while, however, Nerton seemed to be more himself; and while moaning in pain, glared vacantly at the faces round him.

"I didn't—do—it"—he murmured almost inaudibly.

"What's that?" asked the Colonel, quickly, as he bent down over him.

"You did not do what?"

"I—I didn't—kill—Smiley," returned the sick man.

Well—well—never mind—who did it? You're in great danger, Nerton; and you ought to disclose everything so as to clear the innocent. Was it Havildar Bungaroo?"

The sick man gave a scream of horror.—"The traitor!" he shrieked. "He swore he would not betray me, and he has done it. But you must have his life; aye it was he did it: and I'll tell you more," he went on, gasping for breath, and clutching convulsively at the sheets, "He shot Alf. Tudor too, I saw him do it, and he would have killed me, had I not promised to keep it a secret."

"We know all about it," said the Colonel; "and only wanted it corroborated by yourself."

The Cholera-stricken wretch groaned, and writhed under the cramping pains through his whole body.

"I'm—dying," he gasped. "I feel it—I shan't be hung at any rate, but he will, the traitor. Hang him up, Colonel; hang him up. He shot Tudor—he stabbed Smiley; and—betrayed me—hang him up."

Those standing around the dying wretch's bed

wondered how he could be so hardened, and gazed at him in pitying disgust.

"The law of man can have no effect on the Havildar now, Captain Nerton," said the Colonel. "He has gone to render an account for his deeds, before God's throne. Think of yourself; poor miserable man, how will you appear there, when you have to answer for yours?"

Nerton clenched his teeth; and shuddered convulsively for some time—"Don't speak of that," he said at length, very hoarsely.—"It's coming on me fast, I know—let me die—I don't wish to live—I've deserved what I expect when I'm gone—I know there's no hope—no—none—none—it's all death and despair."

The tears flowed fast down the cheeks of the rough old Colonel; and O'Rourke, Viney, and Harris felt their eyes fill too, as they witnessed the awful look of despair on Nerton's rigid face. The Doctor, used to such scenes, merely held his patient's wrist; and gravely shook his head.

"*Look—in—in my desk*"—gasped the dying man—"it's there—Gough's *inno—cent—I—drugged—mercy—mercy*"—his breath now entirely failed him; and though his lips trembled, he could speak no more.

"He's going fast," said the Doctor, in a low voice; "there's no hope now, would you like to be alone with him, Sir?" The Colonel nodded a

silent, sorrowful affirmative ; and the three others softly left the tent.

Down by the bed of the dying man knelt the Veteran Officer ; clasping the white cold hand and raising his sorrowful eyes to Heaven. The prayer of a faithful, honest-hearted Soldier of the Cross ascended to the Mercy-seat ; while the despairing soul of his brother-man was slowly ebbing away, and leaving behind a dreary, lonely, tenantless wreck.

When the Colonel rose from his knees, Nerton's spirit had fled.

It is now necessary to relate by what means the Colonel had obtained a clue as to Smiley's real murderer. On reaching the Hospital tents with Dillon, and the new Surgeon, he was surprised at seeing the Drummer Bagshot in a state of some *deshabile*, rushing frantically towards the Camp of the Regiment. On being loudly recalled by Dillon, who knew that Bagshot was a patient in hospital, the latter returned, and in an excited breathless manner, informed him that Havildar Bungaroo, who was dying of Cholera in one of the tents, was muttering and talking to himself about Ensign Smiley's death, in a most suspicious manner. Taking the drummer with them, the three then entered the tent, where the Havildar was lying stricken down by the fatal disease. Near his head sat the poor wretch's wife, moaning, and rocking

herself to and fro, in a paroxysm of grief; while Shaik Rustum, and Buldar Khan were pitilessly plying him with questions in which the words "Nerton Sahib," and "Tudor Sahib," and "Smiley Sahib" were frequently interlarded.

Rustum rapidly explained that Havildar Bungaroo had just confessed that he had murdered both Mr. Tudor, and Smiley; and that they were eliciting the facts of both murders from him.

The Colonel was greatly taken by surprise; nevertheless he at once adopted a more systematic manner of elucidating the startling disclosures which the Havildar had made, and paper, pens, and ink, having been procured, the words of the dying criminal were translated, and quickly transferred to it.

It appeared that his Company, of which Nerton was the Captain, and Lieutenant Tudor the single subaltern, had formed part of a night piquet on which the Burmese had made a sudden and furious attack.

The young Officer, singling out the leader of the enemy, was engaged in a fierce, hand to hand struggle with him; when Bungaroo, who had loaded his fuzil rushed forward, and fired at the Burman, in hopes of saving the Officer's life. The shot, however, fired carelessly, took effect in poor Tudor's chest; and, though his huge antagonist was bayoneted immediately afterwards by the Havildar,

Nerton, who had perceived the catastrophe, came up, and accused the latter of having deliberately and maliciously taken the life of Lieutenant Tudor. The Havildar solemnly affirmed that he had done it accidentally, but Nerton in a furious rage rushed at him, and attacked him with his sword ; whereupon the former, who had again loaded, brought the Officer to the ground with a bayonet wound in his shoulder, and threatened to shoot him dead, unless he solemnly promised never to mention his unjust suspicions with regard to Tudor's death.

Nerton gave the promise, and was released accordingly. Only a few days ago, however ; taking advantage of his being the possessor of a secret, so important to the Havildar, Nerton had coerced the former into being his tool in murdering Smiley ; his whole object being to implicate Gough, and so get him out of his way, that certain other views he had, might be furthered. At this point, Viney who had come in search of Milton, on Nerton's account, entered the tent ; and finding how matters stood, made his own statements, corroborating partly the confession of the Havildar, and producing the prescription, and empty medicine phial.

On this, the party, with the exception of Dillon, adjourned to Nerton's tent ; where, as we have already related, the dying wretch confirmed the statement made by the Havildar.

As Viney, Harris, O'Rourke, and Dr. Howitt left

Nerton's tent they were met by quiet old Major Hearty, who informed them that he had just left the bed-side of Simcox, who had had a relapse, and was not expected to live another hour.

"The Doctor says he has been drinking too hard," he went on, in a low, grave tone, "he was allowed a little; but, poor fellow, he took such a quantity that it's killing him. I here Nerton's ill too—how is he?"

"He's going too," replied Howitt; gravely; "I've hardly ever seen such a severe case; a few minutes more and you'll hear he's gone."

He was right—for the next moment the Colonel came forth, and motioned the Doctor to step into the tent.

One gentle pressure on the chest of the motionless form, and a slight touch at the wrist, and the Surgeon pronounced the single word "Dead."

CHAPTER XXI.

UNDEEPILLY BUNGALOW.

MR. Huntly, seated in a long-armed chair, in Gough's tent, was reading, and enjoying a smoke; our hero was busy polishing up his guns and rifle-barrels, in which he took a great pride—when, suddenly the voice of Dillon was heard outside the tent door, giving some directions in Hindostanee to the Havildar of the guard. What he said was of course only intelligible to one of the two inmates of the tent, the nonchalance of whose whistle, as he stooped over a lock, and bit of oiled rag, suddenly ceased; while, as the clergyman looked up from his book; he saw his friend's face assume an expression of agreeable surprise.

“What is it?” he asked.

“They're—they're—taking the guard away;” stammered Gough. “Why, perhaps——.”

Here Dillon burst suddenly into the tent, and rushing over to our hero, slapped him heartily on the back, and shook hands with him violently.

“It's all right, old fellow! it's all right about you, I knew it would be. I congratulate you; you're released with every honor. The Colonel wants you over in his tent, and the whole Camp is rejoiced that you've been proved innocent.”

Up jumped Mr. Huntly from his easy-chair, his

spectacles flying off with the suddenness of the movement. He seized Gough's disengaged hand and shook it with the utmost vigour.

"Why—how?—thank God; thank God," was all our hero could utter, while his two friends continued trying, apparently, which could pull an arm off the first.

Mr. Huntly was the first to cease shaking hands. "Gough! I told you so," he cried. "I knew you were innocent. 'The Judge of all the earth has done right.' God be praised, our prayers are answered. You were in great tribulation; but thank the Lord, He has released you from it. How was it discovered?" he added, turning to Dillou.

The countenance of the latter suddenly grew grave. "Ah, it's an awful business, Mr. Huntly. I hav'n't time to tell you of it—besides those concerned in it have nothing more to do with this world. But the Colonel wants to see you alone, Gough; run over, and speak to him. I've lots to do in arranging about these two funerals, so I must be off at once. Thank God it's all right with you; I'm as glad of it as if I was on my way back to Old England!" And, with another parting shake at Gough's hand, he darted out at the door-way as quick as he had entered.

Mr. Huntly and our hero stood silently together for a moment. Their hearts were full—full of joy and gratitude to the Almighty.

"Come, Mr. Huntly—let us kneel, and praise God for this," said Gough. "Almost my first believing prayer to Him was, that I might be released from this fearful trial—and here I am, bless His Holy Name, released from it already. What can I render unto Him for all His mercies?"

"Take the 'cup of salvation,' and call upon His Name," replied the Clergyman.

They knelt together—and poured out their hearts in gratitude, and thanks-givings to the Dispenser of all good. Their sinful hearts were no better than their neighbours' around them; but they brought no righteousness of their own before God's throne: they pleaded their incapability of helping themselves: they pleaded their sinfulness; but—blessed truth!—they pleaded, for they, trusting God's word, could plead, the righteousness of Christ's, the atonement made for them; the blood offered instead of theirs; the veil rent in twain, and the way opened out for them of approaching a Just, but propitiated God.

They asked for further guidance and support, seeking for the promised Comforter; they implored, that in their daily walk and duty, He might be their guide and counsellor, and they concluded by earnestly resigning themselves into His Hands for the future, whatever His Will towards them might be.

Gough had only to make a slight addition to

as dress; and then, taking his sword, for he thought he might be on a matter of duty; he walked over to the Colonel's tent. On his way, he met many of his brother-Officers, who cordially congratulated him on his escape from a foul suspicion; and as he passed on from each, he felt his heart so light and buoyant that he could almost have skipped like a child along the plain. Thoughts which, but a few moments before, would have brought him very bitter reflections, now burst pleasantly over his mind, and brought a glad smile, and a healthy flush over his features. As he entered the Colonel's tent, the old soldier rose from his chair to meet him, and grasped him cordially by the hand, while his eyes almost filled with tears of happiness.

"My dear boy! I'm delighted! Thank God—thank God for your escape. The very cunning way in which the real facts were concealed blinded us all; and circumstances so pointed to yourself, that I could hardly have done less than I did. But it has all been brought to light, and now, —in fact, I beg your pardon for even fearing you were at all guilty of it."

Great tears welled from Gough's eyes, as he stood confronting his C. O., and grasping his hand. He stammered out that he saw no reason whatever, why the Colonel should beg his pardon. He had received an excellent lesson for having given way

to his temper so madly ; and now that he thought of it, his wild angry threat to poor Smiley, before leaving the tent, was quite enough to justify any one's suspicions. He supposed the Colonel had heard all about it. It was no doubt very foolish, and wrong of him, to have acted as he did ; but his pride had been hurt by the reflections cast upon his honor, and integrity ; and besides, the name of somebody else, whom he—what was the use of mincing matters now ?—whom he really loved with all his heart, was also dragged unbecomingly into the conversation, and he couldn't stand that.

“ Ah, I know all about that ” replied the Colonel, “ and you would have avoided any unpleasantness by quietly coming over to tea with us. I intended to have had a little talk with you, about what took place the evening before, between yourself and Ada ; but I saw you were annoyed about something, so I did not press it. I need hardly tell you that Ada told us the circumstances of her having refused your proposal ; and, as Mrs. Maurice and myself knew that her motive for doing so was a right one, we of course coincided with her. But now let me ask you, if you ever knew you had a rival for her hand ? ”

“ A rival, Sir ! no, certainly not, I might have had some apprehensions about it, before that evening ; but she—she then told me that—that, in fact, she cared for no one else.”

“Ah, but somebody else might have cared for her.”

“Oh certainly, Colonel, but *I* didn't know that, and neither did she, I'm sure.”

“Well, my dear boy, I've a very strange story to tell you first, and then to propose a duty to you which will not brook delay. In the first place, you had a rival, which no one suspected. It was Captain Nerton, who has, but an hour ago, gone from amongst us. I was present at his death-bed, when he confessed having been instrumental in causing poor Smiley's death, and told me, with his last breath, to look in his desk. I did so, and found that the poor wretch, who was evidently struck with great remorse, had written a lengthy confession, in which he has acknowledged the crime, and its cause. He forced Havildar Bungaroo, who has since also died, to actually commit the deed, and showed him how to arrange matters so as to cause suspicion to rest on you. It appears also, that he drugged you with a powerful sleeping-draught, while giving you champagne at Mess that evening, in order that the work might be uninterruptedly carried out while you were under its effects. In his confession—I was reading part of it, when you came in—he says—but stop, I'll read it to you in his own own words. ‘While we were encamped at Kajooloopettah, I accidentally came upon Gough and Miss Maurice, seated, in

the evening, at a little distance from the Camp. I stole up unobserved, and, on hearing their conversation, I formed the shocking resolution, the accomplishment of which, has ruined entirely my peace of mind, and, I believe, half-maddened me. Aye, I confess it, cool and calculating as I have been, I now no longer wish to hide the secret which I kept entirely to myself. I loved, and do love Miss Ada Maurice ; but when I heard her acknowledge that she loved Gough, I determined more than ever to be speedily rid of him. I tried to destroy him, the very next day, while out shooting, but he only bears the mark of my knife in his arm, and so escaped. I then matured my plan of getting up a serious quarrel between himself and Smiley, hoping to so arrange matters, as to have him charged with the murder of the latter. Then all that I have before related took place : Bungaroo did his work well, and Gough is suspected, and openly charged with the crime. My mind is now cursed with a fearful remorse, and I purpose in case of Mr. Gough's conviction, to make this confession public, and then—put an end to my own miserable existence, for I am the most wretched of mortals, and the hope I once cherished wickedly, I, hourly, feel can never be realized ! ”

Gough was silent, and his mind painfully racked, while the Colonel read the foregoing. He was an open-hearted, honest fellow ; and could

hardly believe that a fellow-mortal could have such a vilely wicked heart, and such a seared conscience.

Had Nerton been alive at that moment, our hero's feelings towards him would naturally have been full of resentment; but, as the case stood, it was pity for him that now filled his heart, and with that pity, there came a feeling of forgiveness; a wish that he, too, could have been at the death-bed of the man who had injured him, and clasped his hand in pardon for all. Would he have had that feeling had Nerton been then in this world? was the question he asked himself, and he trembled for himself, as he thought of the answer. He remembered the words, "forgive your enemies," and he felt how far short of grace he yet was; but even in his silence, his heart was raised beyond the world; and he felt himself asking pardon for himself, and pleading his own sinfulness, while he himself could hardly pardon that of his late brother-Officer.

"Then, as I before said, I've a matter of duty to propose to you, Gough"—went on the Colonel, after a pause—"I've just received a Memo. from the Assistant Adjutant General, at Sandybad, requesting that an Officer may be at once sent on from the Camp, to report to the Officer Commanding at Garrison, the present general state of health of the Corps. How would you like to go?"

"I'll be delighted, Colonel," replied our hero.

"Its only twenty-four miles into Cantonment, and both my Horse and myself want exercise. When shall I start?"

"Let me see. It's only eleven o'clock now; by the time you've taken tiffin, and have got all the information you can from the Doctor, it will be, say—one; if you start then, you'll be in at five, I suppose."

"Oh, easily; my nag is in excellent condition, Do you think they'll send me back to the Corps, Sir? I'd like to be at my own post, when the Regiment marches in."

"So you will, please God, Gough—so you will. I've no doubt when you've reported yourself, and given the requisite information, that you'll be allowed to rejoin, if you wish; and then of course you'll at once relieve Dillon."

"Thank you, Sir," replied Gough rising, "I'll go, and get ready at once," and he shook hands, heartily, with the good old Commandant.

"Oh! look here, Gough?" cried the latter, as our hero was at the tent-door, "As you're passing the next bungalow on the road in, you might just see if my people are there. They'll be glad to see you, you know, as well as to hear of my welfare. I'll just scribble off a chit to my wife, and send it over to you to take to her. I rather suspect they've halted at the wayside, but if they have gone on, you might find out where they

have gone to in Cantonment, and forward the chit to them."

Gough's face wore a bright happy flush, as he received this Commission from his C. O. The hope of seeing *her* again so shortly, combined with the knowledge that he was restored to liberty, was surely enough to gladden him, so he cheerfully and joyfully consented to execute the Colonel's latest orders.

He took his tiffin in the Mess-tent, with a group of congratulating admirers round him, either eating, drinking, or smoking, as their tastes dictated; but there was an air of sadness suffusing the faces of most of them, for they knew that they were to hear, in a few hours more, the awe-inspiring mournful notes of the "Dead March," and follow to their last earthly resting place, two of those who had so lately been their boon companions. Mr. Huntly, who was a great favorite now with every Officer in the Regiment, was seated near the table, having an animated conversation with Captain Danniels on the latter's pet study, that of Botany; but he himself expressed his intention, should all go well with him, of making a collection of, and closely studying, Indian Insect life. At length, Gough's horse was led up to the Tent; Doctor Milten placed an official-looking paper or two into our hero's hands; au revairs, ta-tas, and injunctions, about securing houses for ten different Officers in

the lines in which the Corps were to be quartered, were rapidly given, and heartily received ; and then mounting his gallant bay charger, and letting him just feel the spurs, Gough was off at a hand-gallop, on the high-road to Sandybad.

Along the whole distance which he had to traverse, the surrounding country was by no means devoid of points of beauty. At one time, the road wound gracefully along the bottom of an irregular gorge, the sides of which were thickly clothed with many various forms of graceful foliage, in which the date-palm, and cocoa-nut formed a considerable part ; while down below him, now on the right hand, and now on the left, was the deep *nullah*, which had been excavated by torrents in the monsoon, and the bottom of which—so luxuriantly did the jungle-wood grow everywhere—could hardly be perceived. At another time he would be cantering along on a hard level road, skirting the side of an enormous mass of bare granite rocks, or rock, for the entire hill seemed to be one huge boulder, the surface of which was polished by time and weather ; and denied a resting place for vegetable matter of any kind. Again he would be splashing through a shallow stream, and climbing carefully up the steep worn bank at the opposite side ; and then on over a plain covered with emerald paddy-fields, and plentifully besprinkled with banian, and mango trees.

But the sun was still pouring down its fierce

rays, and there was no taking the ride leisurely as one would do, on an usual midsummer day, in the "old countrie." Though Gough had been now in the saddle only for about an hour and a half, he was almost drenched with perspiration, and looked languid, and in want of refreshment; he was therefore most agreeably surprised when, on making a sudden turn, he perceived the neatly white-washed, circular-roofed Undeepillay bungalow. As he pulled up his horse at the steps of the wall which surrounded the building, he perceived that a slight little female figure, which had been reclining in an easy chair in a shady corner of the verandah, suddenly looked up, and darted away into one of the rooms, as though fearing the new-comer had been at least a highway-man. But in reality she knew the rider and horse at a glance, and fear had nothing whatever to do with causing her sudden disappearance. It was simply caused by surprise at seeing within a few yards of her, apparently free and happy-looking, the very one, she had been at the moment imagining to be pining a prisoner in his tent, and wrongly charged with a foul crime. Twenty conflicting thoughts flashed rapidly through her mind, as she rushed into the room, where her mother was seated, quietly working. Was he released, and his innocence proved? Had he broken his arrest, and escaped from his guards, knowing himself to be "not guilty," in order to

tell her of his innocence? Was he really the criminal they took him for, now seeking to fly from justice? The bare idea of this thought, she at once dismissed as unworthy of her; and the next suspicion was, that he came to break some terrible news to them, concerning the Colonel; perhaps to recall them only to her father's bed-side.

Mrs. Maurice was greatly startled by her generally quiet, sedate, little daughter rushing in, and kneeling, with a face full of half-joyful, half-timourous consternation, at her side; and when she tried to take that lovely, flushed face between her hands and gaze at it, while she questioned its owner, it was suddenly buried in the mother's lap, and while the heart was fluttering, and the white little hands trembling, and the black brown braids trying to uncoil themselves, a trembling little voice broke out indistinctly with—

“Oh, Mamma dear; Mr. Gough's at the—bung—bungalow steps.”

“How you do, Mrs. Maurice?” cried a well-known, manly voice from the verandah. “I'm the bearer of good news; found innocent; set free, and having the pleasure of carrying a chit to you from the Colonel, who is, thank God, still in good health.”

Up jumps the good old lady at these words, and first gently forcing Ada's head out of the nest it had made for itself, thereby uncoiling altogether the black brown braids and giving the bright happy

looking face a quick motherly kiss, hurries out to welcome, and receive the owner of the manly voice.

A few moments of hurried questioning, explanations, and cordial congratulations, and then he was begged to come in and rest himself, and take some refreshment.

"Here, Ada! where are you? here's Mr. Gough, child; out of all his difficulties, thank God: he must have something to eat and drink at once, as he has to go on to Sandybad to-day."

Ada came forward, and took the hand held out to her. She did not hang down her head, and blush or look away from him sheepishly; but she looked smilingly, and with bright eyes half-full of happy tears, up into his honest, noble face.

"Oh! Mr. Gough, I'm so glad; so thankful it has all come right!"

"Come now, Ada, dear; get something ready for him. The poor man must be both hungry and thirsty, after his long ride," cried Mrs. Maurice, bustling about, and clearing away the table, and the little boys, who would cling round Gough's legs. Our hero utterly ignored all idea of his being in want of any refreshment, but his ready hostess would on no account listen to him. "What! take a ride of thirteen miles in a blazing sun, and then say you don't need anything. Tut, tut. I won't listen to you."

"I'll just go and look after my nag, then; and

see that he gets a rub down, and a mouthful of water ; and then if you'd just let me dip my head and shoulders in a tub of water, I'll be ready to start again in no time."

As our hero passed out into the verandah, he turned his head, and gave a short, but significant, look of entreaty at Ada. Ah ! that language of the eyes ; how easily it is mastered by a certain class. No need of tutors, or *Moonshees*,* or dictionaries. The look was understood as perfectly as though its meaning were uttered in words ; and the glance of the young lady's eye shot back an answer, evidently highly satisfactory. Gough strode out ; gave the necessary directions about his horse in two minutes, and vaulting back over the boundary wall, found Miss Maurice, as he expected, seated as before in the shaded corner of the verandah. She did not get up, and run away, as she had done a few minutes before ; but her heart was fluttering with an undefined but trustful hope ; for she had read in the first glance at her loved one's noble face, that at least some part of her most earnest prayers for him were answered ; and that along with his ardent love for her, he had realized the boundless love of Christ shed abroad in his heart.

"Ada," he said, quietly, as he stooped down, and took her little hand within his own, "I am a

* Teachers of Native languages.

new man now ; I was very rebellious, and very hard of heart. I had no idea what a simple thing it was to 'trust in Jesus.' The trial I have had, has been blessed to me ; for I *do* believe in Jesus my Saviour, and I *have*, for His sake, a sure hope of life eternal. I don't know how I could have lived so long without it before. I don't care who hears me say it. I am not ashamed to own it, thank God, I am now one of His striving children. I know I have many evils to overcome ; many temptations to resist, but I do not trust in my own strength, but in one far stronger than I. His strength is made very perfect in my great weakness."

" Oh Charles, I am so thankful," responded the little voice, as the bright brown eyes were raised to his face, filled with tears of happiness,

" And you are one of His children too, my loved Ada," he continued, " You have my warmest earthly love and affection, and if I have but yours, is there anything that should hinder us now from being man and wife ? I am far from being worthy of you ; but, with God's help, and my own endeavours blessed by Him, I will strive to make you happy, and be a good husband to you. What is your answer to me ?"

He read his answer in her face, as he stooped down and clasped her in his arms.

"Then you are mine, Ada, darling ! you will be my little wife ; my help-meet, through this earthly life ; and my loved companion to a glorious one. You will be my own little Ada ; will you not ?"

"Yes, dearest, and I pray I may be a good wife to you." She nestled her little head on his shoulder, and the lovers' first kisses sealed their mutually-plighted troth, as both whispered little 'soft nothings' and, oh ! such tenderly loving, but 'spoonny' expressions of love.

It was no hard matter to them to tell Mrs. Maurice of the occurrence in the verandah. The mother had confidence in her daughter, and was rejoiced to accept as her son, one, who was that daughter's unprejudiced choice. She embraced him warmly calling him "her dear, dear son."

But the time to part soon arrived ; for the refreshment had been taken *willy-nilly*, and the head and neck dipped in the cool water-tub. The bay steed was re-saddled, and brought round. With great consideration for the young couple, the worthy old lady withdrew, and left them to bill and coo in the usual manner. Be it known that though both ladies with natural curiosity, questioned him as to how his innocence was discovered, he maintained a studied silence with reference to it, for he did not feel himself equal to the task of narrating the disclosures of the last chapter.

Mrs. Maurice's work-scissors were lying on the

table, while the lovers were billing and cooing close to it. The thick black brown braids, though hastily coiled up, would insist on uncoiling themselves; and the scissors and the braids suggested an idea to our hero's mind.

He seized the scissors, and begged for a portion—a very small portion of one of the braids. Could there be any refusing such a simple request? The black brown twist was quickly untwisted, and, a shining lock having been deftly clipped off, was twisted and coiled up again, in a minute or two. Then he had to bend down his head and submit to be dispoiled too of a short, curly little lock, and both having been put carefully up, the last long kiss was given; “God be with you, my darling,” fervently uttered, and the lovers parted for a while.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DESTINATION.

TWO more weeks under canvas, till all trace of the virulent plague had disappeared from among them, and the gallant Condapillay Rangers were marching gaily into Sandybad, their colors uncased, and two different bands at their head, alternately playing them into Cantonment.

By the side of Colonel Maurice, rode the General who commanded the station, accompanied by his usual Staff; while several Officers quartered in Sandybad, were darting about here and there, welcoming an old acquaintance, as he strode on with his Company (for all, except Staff Officers, were afoot now), or seeking out amid the sections as they passed, some old, remembered face.

In the rear of the Light Company, at his old well-kept post, rode our hero, Charles Gough, his face lighted up with a keen joyousness, as he chatted gaily to his no less joyous companion, and affianced, Ada Maurice, who rode her little Pegu pony by his side. Mr. Huntly, in a broad-brimmed wide-awake, ambled along beside little O'Rourk, holding tightly in his frisky little pony, which seemed to know that the troubles of being on the march were nearly over, and to endeavour

to get into a snug stable again as soon as possible. Captain Danniels had met with an old acquaintance to whom he was giving an animated account of Burmese *floræ*, and promising to exhibit his much-valued specimens. Dillon had met with a brother and sister-in-law, with whom he was in close conversation, interlarding his sentences with many quotations from poets and rhymers; while Hillier and Harris had each some old or new acquaintance, pressing them to accept their hospitality, till they were quite settled down, or questioning them as to the pleasantness or otherwise of their march. Viney was not with the Regiment. He had ridden on in hot haste to look over the new lines, and allot to each Company their respective huts; but he too had met with one he knew, and was under a promise to breakfast with his friend.

Their march was over; their long-looked-for destination was reached, and they were to be, comparatively speaking, at rest for a few years in the pleasant Cantonment of Sandybad. Here we must leave them and bring our story, which was one, professedly, of "On the March" to an end. If the reader has patiently followed us so far, we would with a feeling of sadness bid him "adieu," knowing he is about to close this book, and put it aside. But a word or two ere we part. If this

little story has been the means of interesting your mind for a few hours; we hope it may also have produced a thoughtful effect.

Let us reflect for a moment before we say "Good-bye." Are we not all, in military parlance, "On the March," moving along the great high-road of life, to our destination—the grave? To what purpose then are we thus living and moving? We know that the end will come sooner or later. Are we fearful of it, or ready and prepared for it? This important question has attracted the attention of many thousands, and they have never ceased giving it their most earnest attention, till their doubts have been removed, and they know that they are marching on to a bright and happy land, where they shall for ever be at rest. We must not be in doubt either—Good bye, reader! let us look forward, onward, upward; for we all know that some destination must be arrived at, and we shall not be always

ON THE MARCH.

THE END.

